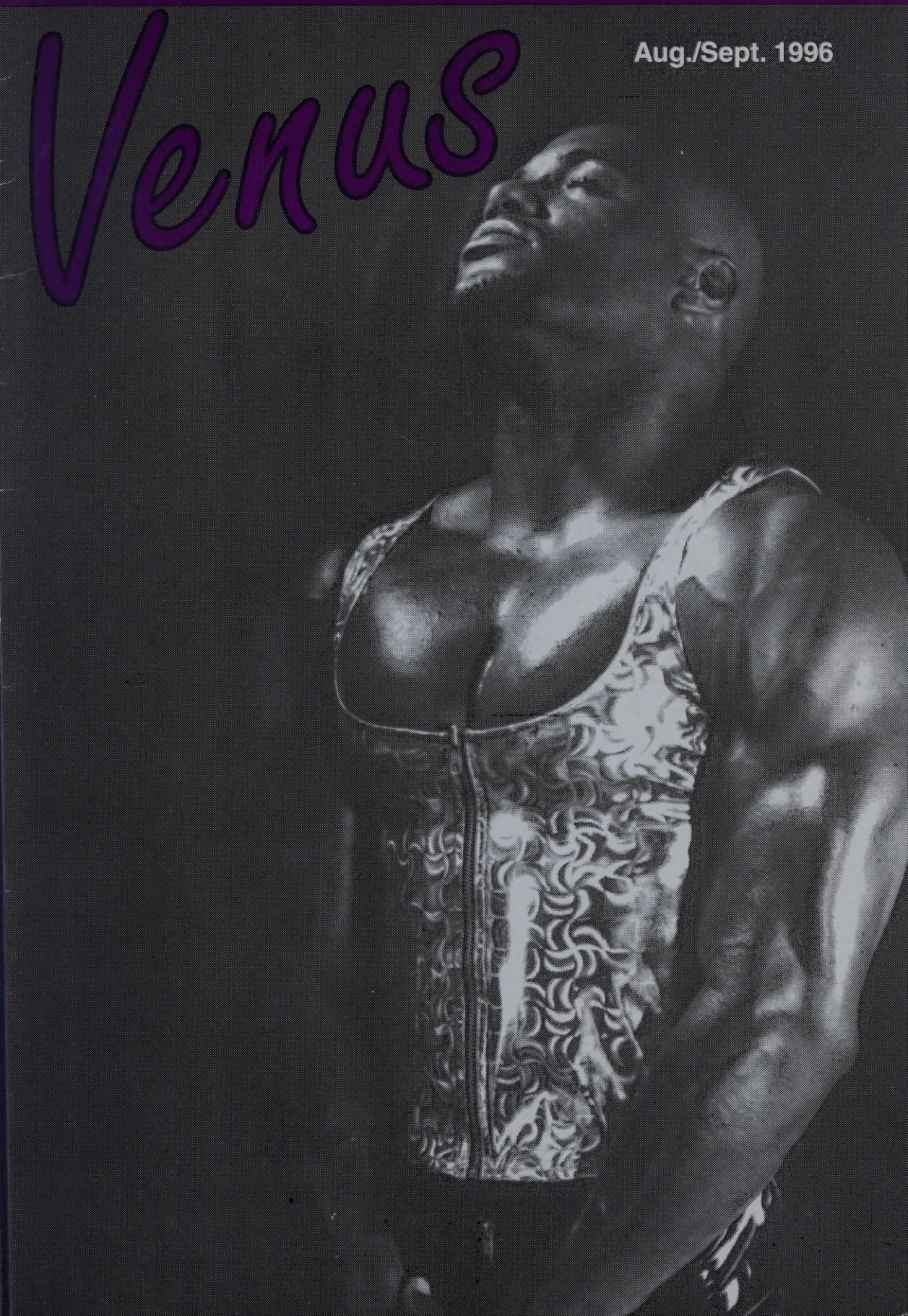
Special Black Gay Pride Issue

Venus

Aug./Sept. 1996



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FREE COMMUNITY TABLE! BRING YOUR FLYERS!

Second Sunday

Atlanta's Premier Organization for Brothers In The Life

PRESENTS.....

Where The Boys Are '96

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31ST
3PM-10PM

enjoy lakeside entertainment, jacuzzi, music, food, games and much much more...

$10.00 in advance/$15.00 at the door

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!!

call Second Sunday's voicemail for more information and tickets

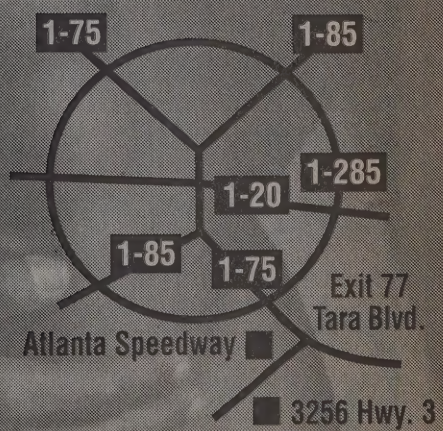
404/325-7321

Don't miss out of this Labor Day Event!!!

Directions from Downtown Atlanta:

Less than 20 minutes from downtown

- Take 1-75 South to Exit 77 (Tara Boulevard)
- Take Tara Blvd. approximately 17 miles
- See Atlanta Motor Speedway on the right
- Continue 1.5 miles
- Pass Sweeties Flea Market on right
- Make next U-Turn from opening on the road
- See 2517 mailbox on the right
- Make a right into driveway
- Proceed to the second house: 3256 Hwy. 3



This is WHERE THE BOYS ARE '96

Get Your Life

August 30 — September 2

IN THE LIFE

ATLANTA

"Celebrating the Black Les/Bi/Gay/Trans Community"

Itinerary

Thursday	*August 29, 1996*	*Kick Off Reception*
Friday	*August 30, 1996*	*Welcome Reception*
Saturday	*August 31, 1996*	*Cultural Arts Festival*
Saturday	*August 31, 1996*	*Candlelight Vigil*
Saturday	*August 31, 1996*	*Venus Magazine sponsored Black Lesbian/Gay Ball*
Sunday	*September 1, 1996*	*Family Reunion Picnic*

Accommodations

coordinated by Venus Magazine

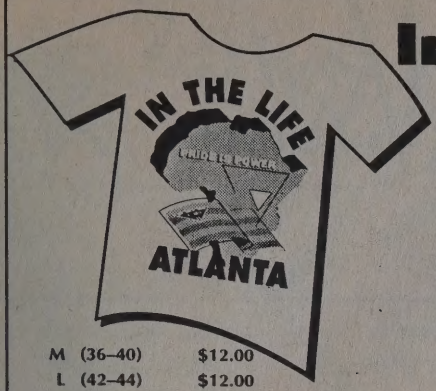
**Holiday Inn Airport*
404-762-8411
$65 single/double
10 minutes south of downtown

Marriott Courtyard Downtown
404-659-7777
$75 single/double

Castlegate Hotel Economy
404-351-6100
$55 single/double
10 minutes north of downtown

**Host Hotel*

ITLA Pride Line 404-872-6410 • Fax 404-874-1024
6065 Roswell Rd. NE Ste. 2232 • Atlanta, Georgia 30328



In The Life Atlanta

"Celebrating the Black Les/Bi/Gay/Trans Community"

M	(36–40)	$12.00
L	(42–44)	$12.00
XL	(46–48)	$14.00
XXL	(50–52)	$14.00

Local pick-ups call ITLA's pride line
Leave your name, phone, size and quantity of shirts needed.

404-872-6410

All calls will be returned to arrange for pick-up/delivery.

cut along line and mail to ITLA

QTY	SIZE	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT

Name

Address

City State Zip

Phone (if any questions about your order)

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Subtotal

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TOTAL

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LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR

I read your article "My Body-My Temple," (July 1996), and was quite impressed with your frankness and determination. It seemed like you showed 'tough love' for your people. This is a good thing. I'm now working toward becoming a vegetarian, but I'm having a hard time kicking the coffee habit. I guess my addiction to caffeine is stronger than my will to stop.

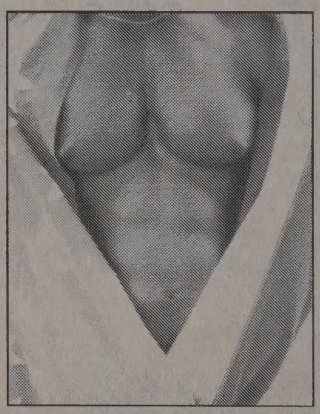
R.J.
Atlanta

DEAR EDITOR

Thank you for the story on the church burnings, "Where will These Fires Lead Us?,"(July 1996). The article truly helped me to step back and place things into perspective. The concept of the burnings symbolizing the "pushing back" of Americans unwilling to accept diversity or change is interesting.

Toby Taylor
Washington, D.C.

DEAR EDITOR



Let me take a moment to commend you on your great cover photo on the July issue. Not only was it creative, but it represented the natural sculptured beauty of the African-American woman. Great job!

Robin Joy
Atlanta

Sorry Robin! The model on the July cover is a man! Don't feel bad, girl! Every woman in the City thought the image was a female's body.

Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

July 1996
Vol. 2., No. 7

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TONY
by Jena P. Jones

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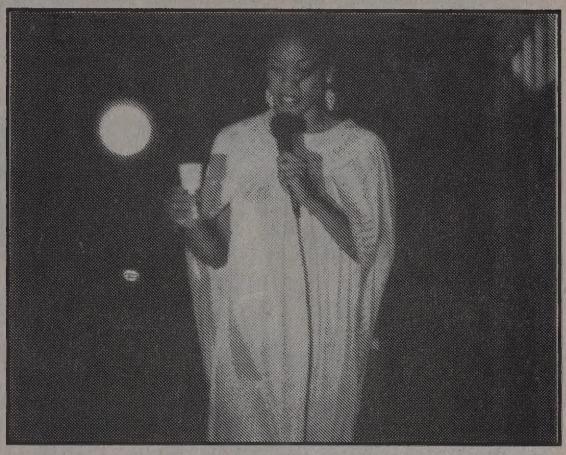

I SAID YES!

The Perry Watkins Story!!

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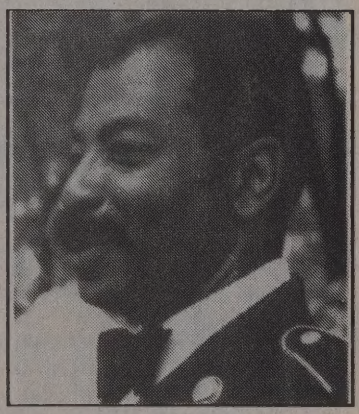

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Photo by Ron Singleton

Venus™ MAGAZINE

FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

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Fri. August 30, $7.00
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Holiday Inn Airport

THE MAIN EVENT

Black Gay Pride Ball
Sat. August 31, $10.00

11 p.m. - 4 a.m.

Hot models heat up the runway while you ***dance all night!*** Festive Attire.

Holiday Inn Airport

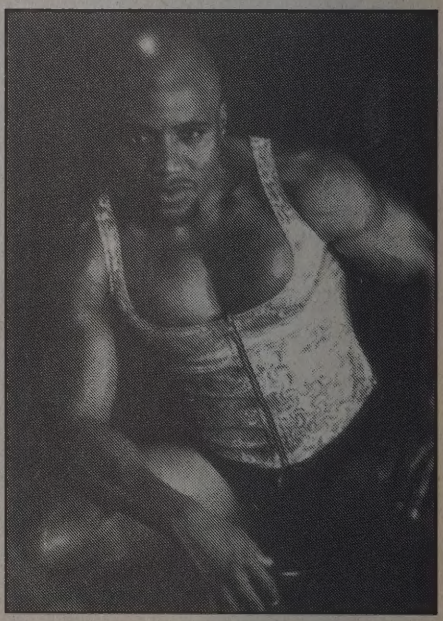


photo by Jena P. Jones

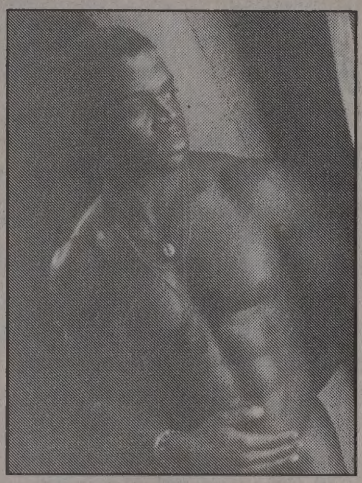
All Venus Events are held at the Host Hotel,
Holday Inn Airport:
1380 Virginia Ave., 85 South, Exit 19.
Rooms - $65.00 single/double
(404) 762-8411
Code Word - "Black Pride"

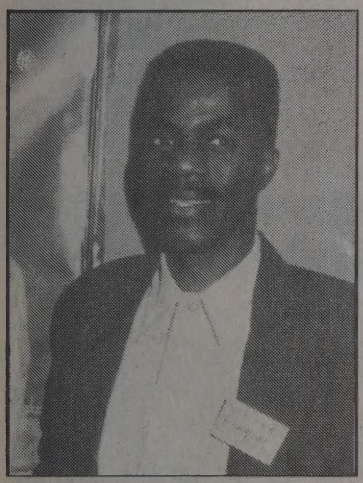
H O S T S

Black Gay Pride!

"WHO HE?"

He's your cover man on Venus! July issue without the flag! Photo-journalist Warren O. Fletcher opens his "Who He?" exhibit on Friday August 30, 6 p.m.
Holiday Inn Airport



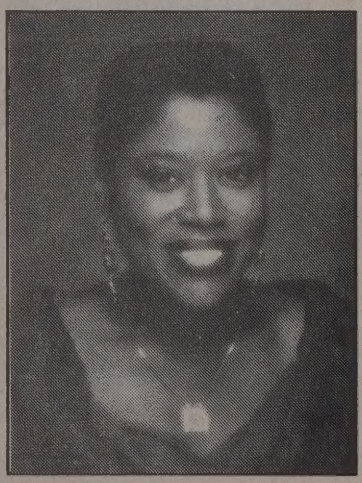


HOW TO FIND THAT SPECIAL MAN

Relationship Therapist, Ulester Douglas, MSW, facilitates this dynamic ***FREE*** workshop for Brothers only. • ***Holiday Inn Airport***
Saturday August 31, 12 noon - 1:30 p.m.

BUTCH IN THE STREETS, FEMME IN THE SHEETS

Corporate Trainer and author, Joan Fountain, facilitates an open discussion exploring lesbian sexuality. A real gender-bender for sisters only. ***FREE!***
Holiday Inn Airport
Sat. August 31, 2 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.



Ask Marian

New York Advice columnist, Marian Farrah, has joined the Venus Family!! From London to Trinidad, from Canada to Detroit, Marian has lived, seen and heard it all! So when you have questions about relationships, whether they be about love, friendship, family, coming out, your job, sex or the lack of sex, just do what we do...Ask Marian!

PHOTOGRAPHY: JENA P. JONES

Dear Marian,

I am a 40 year-old professional who's caught in between a rock and a hard place. I thought I was secure with my homosexuality. However my partner is becoming more publicly seen and known. I want to support all he does, but I get these feelings of reluctance and decline some of his invitations to participate in "the causes." How can I get over myself and really become liberated?

Dear Almost Comfortably Out,

You have clearly come out to yourself and are comfortable with your partner in your private life. But being "out" in public can feel like coming out all over again, each time. What was it like for you when you first came out to yourself? How does your homosexuality affect your relationships with your family and friends? Painful experiences such as loss of esteem, rejection or non-acceptance from people you care about can affect the way you feel about your homosexuality. How can you become liberated? By accepting yourself unconditionally. We are all exposed from an early age to negative attitudes and ignorance about homosexuality. These attitudes come from the very places we rely on to learn about ourselves and the world. We need to unlearn these untruths. You don't need to "get over yourself," you need to heal from the internalized homophobia that is a part of our every day diet. The first step is to recognize it. The second step is to validate yourself. Break the isolation and talk to others in the life about your struggles. Surround yourself with affirming images of gay life through as many mediums as possible: books, performance, art and journal writing. Your self-liberation will be a process that you will repeat for the rest of your life.

If you have a question for Marian just drop her a line at: E-mail: Venusmag1@aol.com or write ASK MARIAN-VENUS MAGAZINE P.O. Box 89238 Atlanta, GA 30312

Venus Hits the Internet

WE LOVE LETTERS!!

We need to hear from you!! Your letters to the Editor are always welcome and needed. Whether you love us, hate us or simply want to respond to an article, send us more mail!

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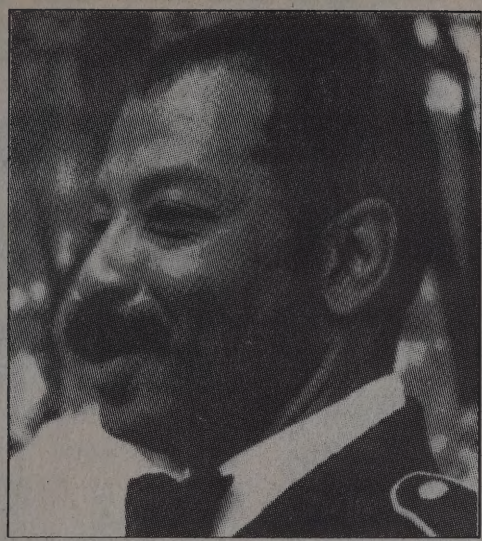


"I SERVED WITH PRIDE, HONOR AND DISTINCTION, FROM INDUCTION TO RETIREMENT. AN AFRICAN AMERICAN, WHO IS HOMOSEXUAL. I AM NOT THE FIRST TO DO SO AND THERE IS NO REASON I SHOULD BE THE LAST. QUITE LIKE THE RUNNER WHO BROKE THE FOUR MINUTE MILE, TO IMPROVE ON HIS EFFORT, THE SUCCESSFUL ONES STUDIED HIS TECHNIQUES."

Perry J. Watkins Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army (Retired) in a letter to President Clinton

by Morgan Gwenwald

Before we ever heard that phrase "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," Sgt. Perry Watkins was not only telling, he was performing regular drag acts while serving in the U. S. Army. Despite his recent death, the story of Perry Watkins and his struggle with the U.S. Government lives on as one of the most remarkable chapters in our fight for inclusion in the military.

Perry was drafted into the Army in 1968 at the height of the Vietnam war. On his official forms he checked the box "yes" in acknowledgement of his homosexual tendencies. He described his enlistment experience: as the examining physician held my Report of Medical History form in his hands and asked me, "What does this mean?" pointing to the block I had checked "yes." I said, "It means just what it says." He then asked, "And what is that?" With six other people present and listening, I said, "It means that I am homosexual." I made my statement with pride and dignity without shame or fear. I was immediately sent to an Army psychiatrist, who believed humiliation was part of the evaluation process. I was asked about sexual conduct, and acknowledged both oral and anal activity... I was ultimately found qualified for service and drafted in May of 1968.

Perry went on to negotiate his way of serving with pride and professionalism, being open about his sexuality to the chain of command and his fellow soldiers, and demanding the same respect and protection afforded all soldiers. He re-enlisted several times and served successfully for the next fourteen years. Within that time he also performed for the Army as "Simone," his drag persona.

Then in 1982 the Department of Defense issued a directive dictating "homosexuality incompatible with military service," and claiming it undermined discipline, good order, and morale. At this period the Army moved to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 48

Atlanta's Black Gay Pride Pocket Guide

Host Hotel Holiday Inn Airport 404-762-8411, code for special rate, "Black Pride'

Tuesday Aug. 27

ADODI MUSE-TONY DANIELS' ONE MAN SHOW

-Miles To Go Before I Sleep. Gay and Lesbian Visitor's Center. 1374 W. Peachtree St, 8pm, $5.00

Thursday Aug. 29

IN THE LIFE ATLANTA,(ITLA)

Kick off reception, call Pride line for time, location and tickets at 404 872-6410.

Friday Aug. 30

ITLA -WELCOME RECEPTION

6 pm-9 pm Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave, 85 south ,exit 19: Speakers Dr. Sylvia Rhue and Keith Boykin. Call Pride line for tickets. 404-872-6410

VENUS-PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBIT "WHO HE?"

by Atlanta photojournalist Warren O. Williams, opening 6 pm., Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 South, exit 19, Free.

VENUS-OFFICIAL WOMENS ICE BREAKER

9 pm-2 Am Holiday Inn Airport 1380 Virginia Ave, 85 South, exit 19: $7

Saturday Aug. 31

ITLA- CULTURAL ARTS FESTIVAL

11 am-6 pm, call Pride line for location and tickets at 404-872-6410. Showing 'All God's Children' co-produced by Dr. Sylvia Rhue.

VENUS-SHOWING 'THE PERRY WATKINS STORY'

2 pm, Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 South, exit 19, Free.

VENUS-FOR BROTHERS ONLY

12 noon-1:30 pm, Workshop on "Finding and Keeping that Special Man" Facilitator, Ulester Douglas MSW, relationship therapist. Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 south, exit 19 , Free.

VENUS-FOR SISTERS ONLY

2 pm-3:30 pm, Open Discussion explores Lesbian sexuality, "Butch in the Streets, Femme in the sheets and vice-verse" and "Why are male identified black lesbians the least accepted in black gay culture" Facilitated by Joan Fountain, Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 south, exit 19, Free.

BLACKOUT-HOTLANTA '96

Black Pride Bash, 2 pm-8pm, Williamsberg Estates, Sir Henry Street, South West Atlanta, free food, cash bar, $5 call for directions 404-629-9879.

B.W.M.T. ATLANTA-SUMMER BASH 1996

Pool party plunge #2. Food provided (cookout). Fun begins @ 2:30 p.m. Call Tony and Tray for details @ 404-609-9773. 738 Hill St. SE (Grant Park)

SECOND SUNDAY-WHERE THE BOYS ARE '96

3 pm-10 pm, 3256 Hwy 3; lake, entertainment, Jacuzzi, music, food, games, $10 , call for directions 404-325-7321.

ITLA -CANDLELIGHT AIDS AND BREAST CANCER VIGIL

7 pm ,Howell Park-West End, Ralph David Abernathy Blvd.

BMT-SECOND ANNUAL LAOR DAY PARTY

The Mansion, Piedmont @ North Ave., $12 adv/$15 door. (404) 755-2684

VENUS- BLACK GAY PRIDE BALL

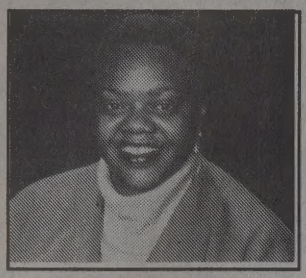
Grand Ballroom, Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 south, exit 19, Festive Attire, $10 door, cash bar, hot music and entertainment.

Sunday Sept. 1

ITLA- FAMILY REUNION PICNIC

Perkerson Park South West Atlanta, 11 am-dusk, Free, call Pride line for directions. 404-872-6410.

From The Editor



What a difference a year makes!

Atlanta's Black gay and lesbian community has grown in monumental proportions over the past 2 years, but these last 12 months has been phenomenal. There exist for the first time a REAL sense of community, meaning that people and organizations really do care about one another.

Organizations like Second Sunday , a discussion group for black gay men and Zami, a support group for black lesbians have held joint steering committee meetings to learn more about one another. Although both groups have exited independently for years, the need to share knowledge and information about 'what it's like to be a black lesbian or gay man in Atlanta' has proven to become necessary. Why is this sharing of knowledge necessary? Because we do not have a choice in the matter, we MUST work together and we must get over our stereotypes of each other in order to best communicate. The brothers had a chance to learn that all black lesbians are not 'militant man haters' and the Sisters have learned that all gay men are not 'sissies with attitudes'.

Speaking of working together, our social organizations, once rivals, are now pooling their resources to get the word out about their various events. Our AIDS organizations are getting more financial and volunteer help from black gays and lesbians than the years before. Atlanta's black gay pride organization, In The Life Atlanta, with a handful of volunteers has planned a fabulous Labor Day weekend. Although faces have changed over the past year, the group started with nothing and now has a solid non-profit structure and is already working on next year's budget. Of course nothing happens without a bit of drama but that seems to be part of the growth process with ANY organization. To ITLA we say 'Well Done!'

As a growing community we also recognize our political strength. A sizable donation to Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney's campaign marked the first time a group of Out African-American gays and lesbians in Atlanta jointly endorsed a candidate for public office. It's only a matter of time before a political umbrella group for black gay and lesbian organizations will surface. Our community needs it and all that we need some how comes forth.

The bottom line is : the Train has finally left the station! If we as a community can stay on track, we might actually make it to the next millennium, politically and socially, 'ON TIME'. And that's what I call BLACK GAY PRIDE.

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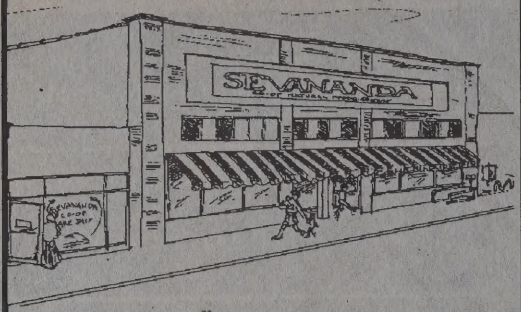

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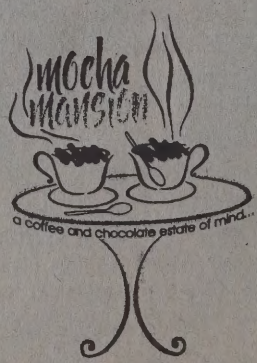

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Pride is Power!

by Charlene Cothran

Linda Villarosa, Executive Editor of Essence Magazine, is one of many to appear in Dr. Sylvia Rhue's documentary 'All God's Children,' to debut during Black Gay Pride.

The theme for In The Life Atlanta, the new organization which now produces the Atlanta's Black gay pride weekend, rings aloud with the truth about those of African Descent who are gay/lesbian/transgendered and questioning people-We Ain't Shamed and We Ain't Scared to claim all of who we are. Atlanta's Pride celebration, now in it's second organized year, will offer visitors from around the country an array of Proud and Powerful activities including a cultural arts festival featuring the Atlanta debut of "All God's Children." The film, co-produced by Dr. Sylvia Rhue, a licensed clinical social worker and Doctor of human sexuality of Los Angeles, is a critically acclaimed documentary which deals head on with the effects of homophobia on African-Americans, particularly

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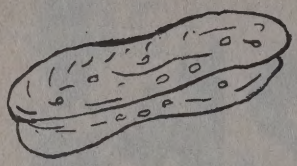
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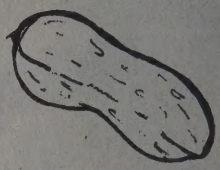
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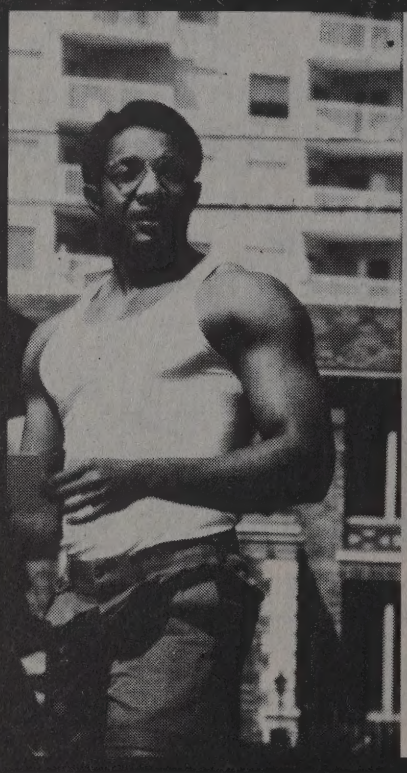
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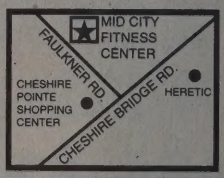

PRIDE IS POWER

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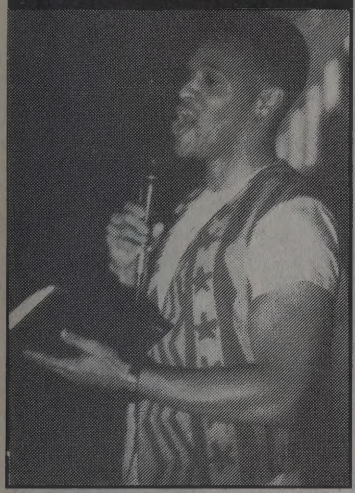
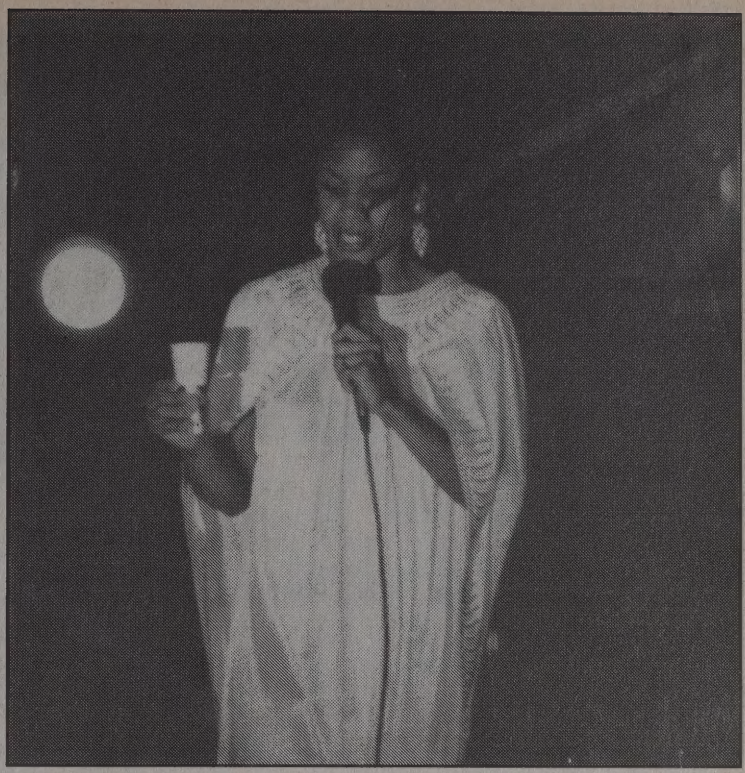


on African-American Churchgoers. Check your pride guide for time and location.



Atlanta actress J. Karen Thomas, right, accompanied by Stewart, performed at last years Candlelight AIDS Memorial.

The story of the life of Perry Watkins has also been captured on film and will be presented during the Pride festivities. Watkins, a black Sergeant First Class drafted in the U.S. Army in 1968, on his official forms checked the box 'yes' acknowledging that he was gay. The film describes his enlistment experiences and includes several scenes of drag shows he performed for the entertainment pleasure of his comrades. The film is co- produced by New York's Chiqui Cartegena, and will be shown at the host hotel, Holiday Inn Airport on Saturday Aug. 31 at 2:00 pm.

Perhaps no one captures the Pride and Power of Black men better than Atlanta photographer Warren O. Williams. In his exhibit entitled "Who He?", Williams' goal is to 'change the representation of black men in art, through documentary portraits and photojournalism.' Williams' very androgynous shot of a brother draped in the American flag appeared on the front cover Venus' July issue. The controversial cover shot provoked both raved reviews and shock as many readers were convinced that the model was a nude woman. The exhibit will hang at the host hotel, Holiday Inn Airport on Fri. and Sat. Aug. 30th and 31st.

Speaking of Pride and Power, free workshops will be held honoring the relationships of black gays and lesbians. Ulester Douglas, MSW, consultant/Imago relationship therapist will address 'How do we improve the chances of finding and keeping that special man' and 'How to get through the difficult times—the power struggles.' This session is for brothers only, from 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm on Saturday at the host hotel. Seating is limited!

The ladies in the City are strongly encouraged to attend a discussion/workshop on lesbian sexuality, more specifically, 'Why a 'Butch' in the streets tends to be 'Femme' between the sheets and vice-versa' and 'Why the African-American male-identified black lesbian is the least accepted among black gay culture.' The discussion will be facilitated by Sacramento's Joan Fountain, dynamic corporate consultant

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

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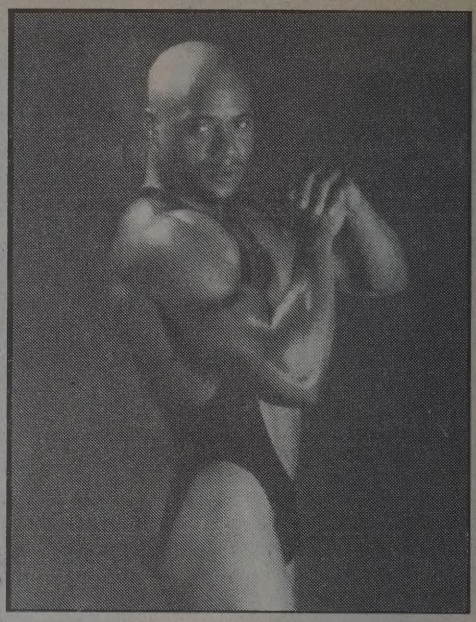

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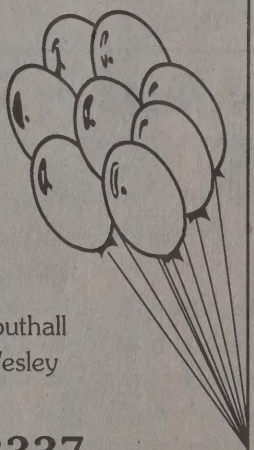

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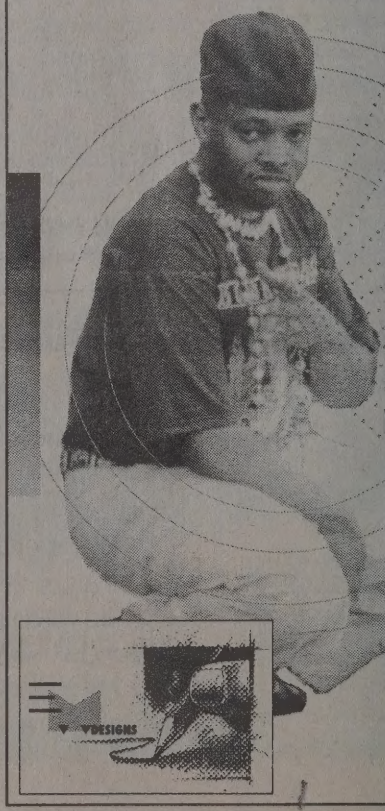

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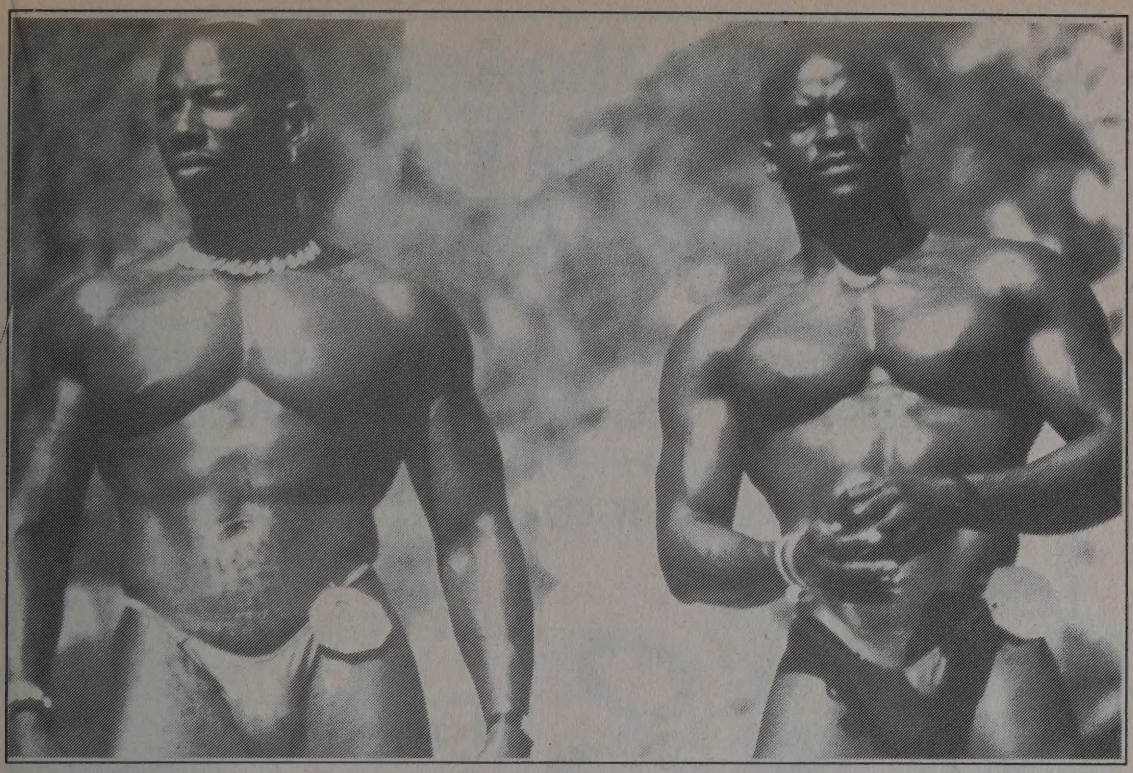

Hard Body Contestants head to Phoenix, Arizona's Black Gay Pride, DIVAS IN THE DESERT.
PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

PRIDE IS POWER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

and author of an autobiography 'Don't Get me Started!'

The Official Women's Ice Breaker will immediately follow ITLA's Welcome reception at the Holiday Inn Airport's main Ballroom from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Meet gorgeous women from all over the world at this 'getting-to-know-you' party.

What ever you do, DON'T MISS the Black Gay Ball on Saturday night! Doors open at 11 pm at the main Ballroom, Trust that Atlanta WILL NOT be the same the next morning! With hot music and dancing, Festive Attire, and great entertainment, we promise to keep you screaming and dancing all night!

What would Black Gay Pride be without a Picnic? In classic southern style ITLA's Family Reunion in Perkerson Park will close the weekend of celebration. Enjoy great food, vendors, games and music while making plans to attend the next two black gay Pride Celebrations! That's right! Just when you thought it was over, San Francisco's Bay Bash '96 enjoy's it's second year of pride and power. Over 1,500 attendees are expected at their annual opening party, followed by their Bay Bash Cabaret, the Bay Bash Barbecue and of course the Bay Bash Sunset Cruise. Scheduled for October 10-13,1996, contact event producer Andre Morgan at 415-922-5156.

Perhaps the ultimate black gay pride experience will take place in Phoenix, Arizona, Nov. 1,2,3, 1996. Divas in The Desert host it's first pride celebration with an impressive line up of activities. Some of the highlights include a welcome reception at the Ramada Hotel Camelback, a national Bid Whist Tournament, a Unity picnic at Roosevelt Dam & Lake and a Hot Body Contest -male & female divisions-featuring Atlanta's own Tony D., winner of L.A.'s At The Beach Mr. Hot Body '96. For more info call 602-978-6219.

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Miles to Go Before I Sleep

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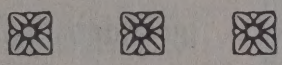

by Duncan Teague

They stood on the steps of the church discussing the possibility of their groups working together. Her theatre troupe had recently moved south from New York. They were quickly gaining a good reputation in the Atlanta's les/gay/bi/trans community. His literary group had been in existence less than a year, and gaining exposure by performing on a regular basis. They talked briefly about their roles in this collaboration, and their excitement about this joint venture. Slated for August 27, at the Gay and Lesbian Visitors Center.

Adodi Muse's Tony Daniels performs his life story at the Gay & Lesbian Visitor's Center.

She is Sonya Hemphill, the founder and Executive Director of Think It's Not When It Is (TINWII) Inc. The troupe is dedicated to promoting positive lesbian and gay imagery in the media. Founded in 1990, TINWII, has established itself as one of the premiere lesbian theatre troupes in the country.

He is Tony Daniels, the president and a founder of The Adodi-Muse-An Outsiders Collective and a Gay Negro Ensemble, the only literary group for African-American gay and bisexual men in Atlanta. The Adodi-Muse commits it's time and energy to the telling of their individual and collective experiences, performing the work they pen and the work of others who support their survival. They hope to create the lasting presence of their stories by publishing and chronicling these words, song and poetry.

The joint venture between the two is a one "queen" performance based on a transitional period of Tony Daniels' life. The performance will cover the 11 years, from May of 1985 until the present. The first 9 years., Tony was dealing with being HIV+, and the last two have found him battling with AIDS. This is a very personal, powerful, and frank look at the deadly affects of this deadly virus. The performance piece is being called "Miles To Go Before I Sleep". Ms. Hemphill will direct and produce, The Adodi-Muse will co-produce, and Tony Daniels will make his acting debut as the character, Solomon, based on his life.

This will be the first of many performances done by an individual member of The Adodi-Muse, with the remaining members as producers. They will also continue to collaborate with the many talented artists in the community. They feel that by encouraging each member to do independent projects, they will bring back to the Muse more experiences and a renewed love for the work. You can get more information by contacting the Adodi-Muse at (404) 521-2515.

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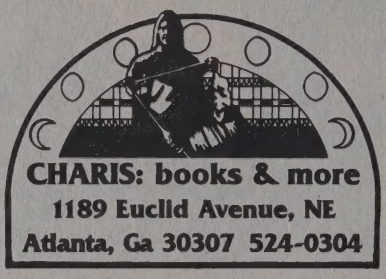

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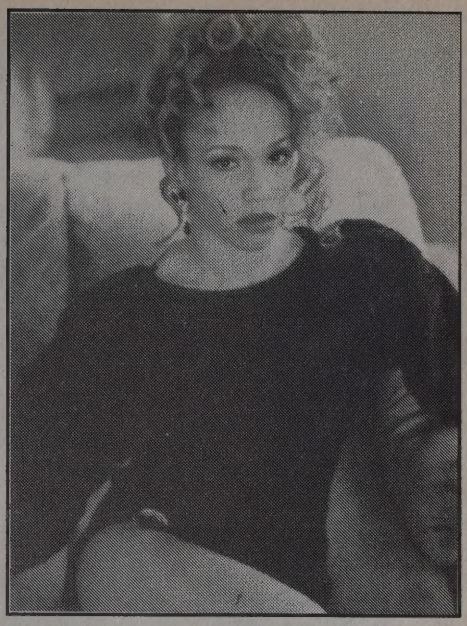
Career: . . . . . Literary expressionist

Hometown: . Philadelphia, PA

Latest Book:. "Pryor Convictions and other life sentences" by Richard Pryor with Todd Gold



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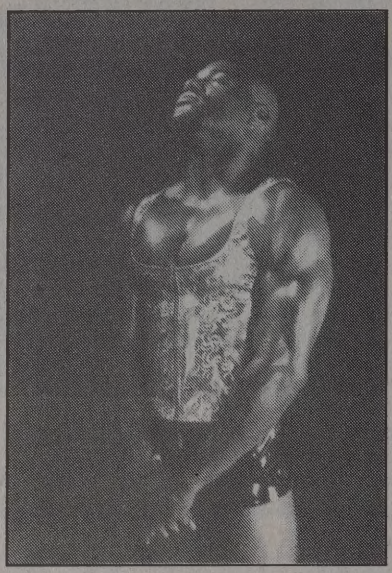

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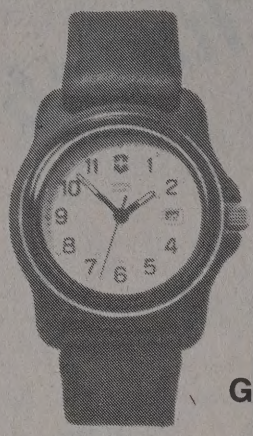

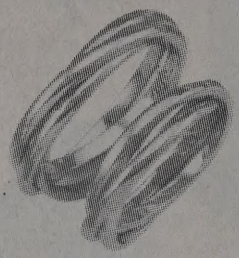

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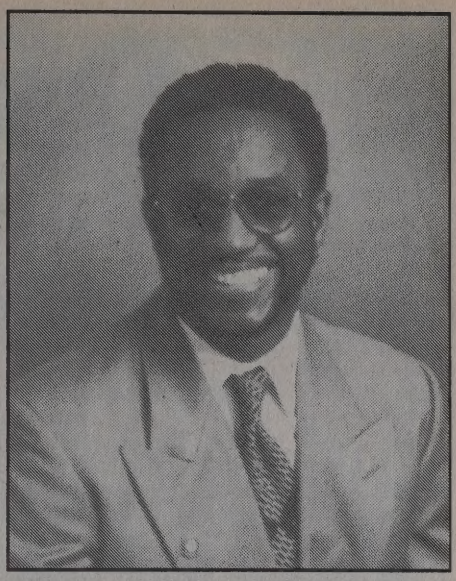
Status: . . . . . Romantically Challenged

Career: . . . . . Information sciences and volunteer

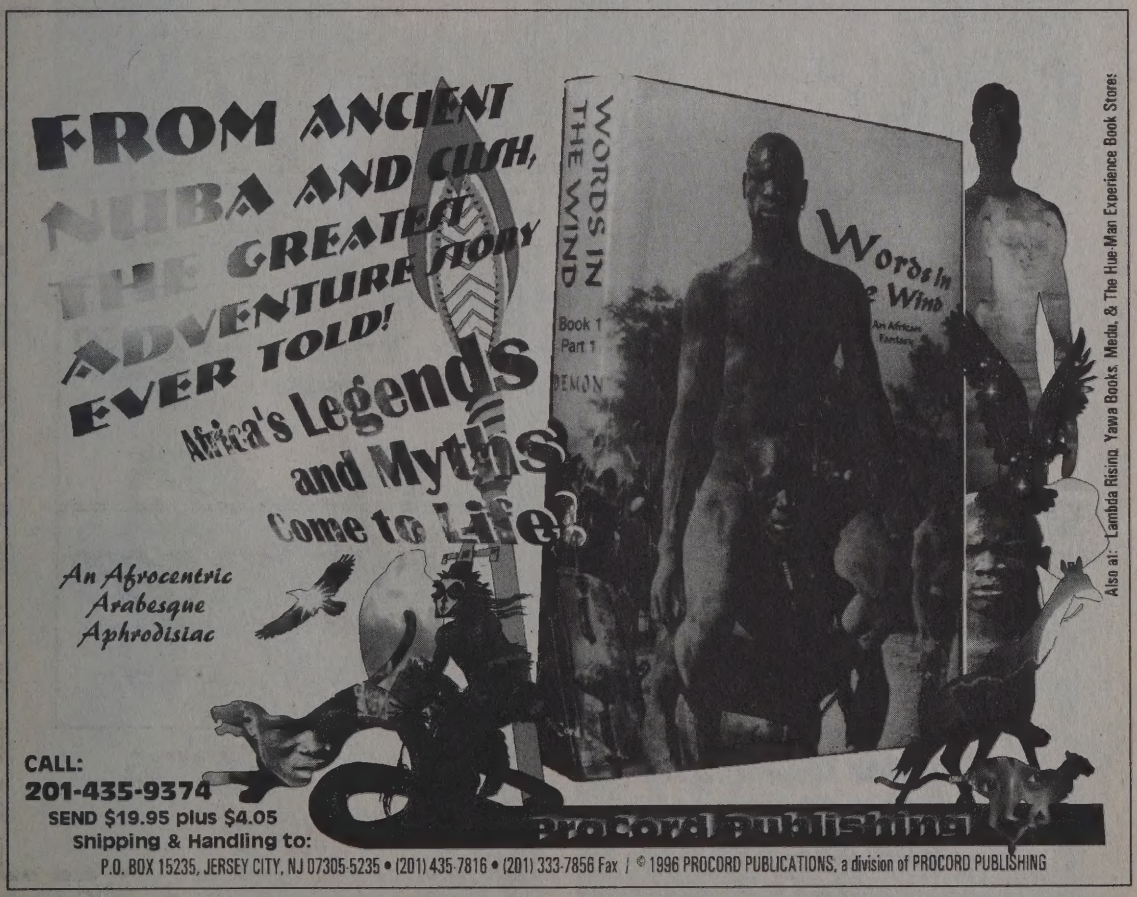
Hometown: . Fort Lauderdale, FL

Latest Book: . "The Black Holocaust for Beginners" by S.E. Anderson



With inspiration from the Million Man March, foundation from BLK and support from the Broward County Library, Eric researched, and developed 'NLIGHT'N'N', published "Read and Write On!", a directory of publications by and about people of Afrikan decent In-The-Life.

Eric has been in one of four vice presidential positions of the Fort Lauderdale Branch N.A.A.C.P. for over a dozen years, is an adult literacy tutor trainer; serves on the county's literacy board, and is on Fort Lauderdale's Aviation Advisory Board.



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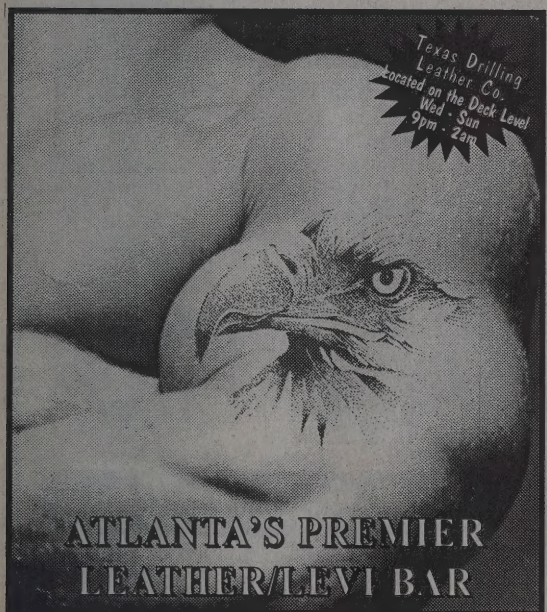

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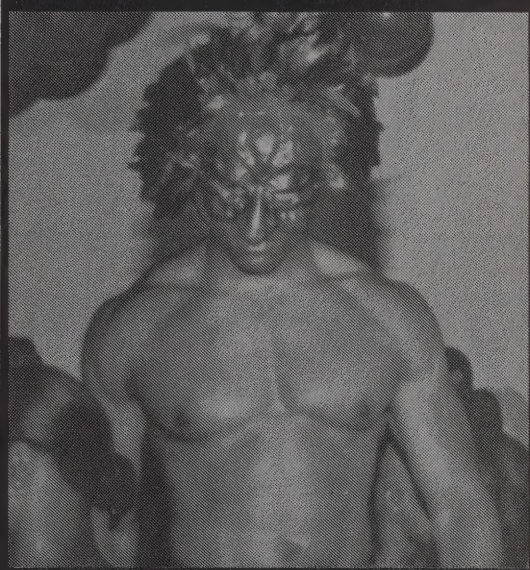

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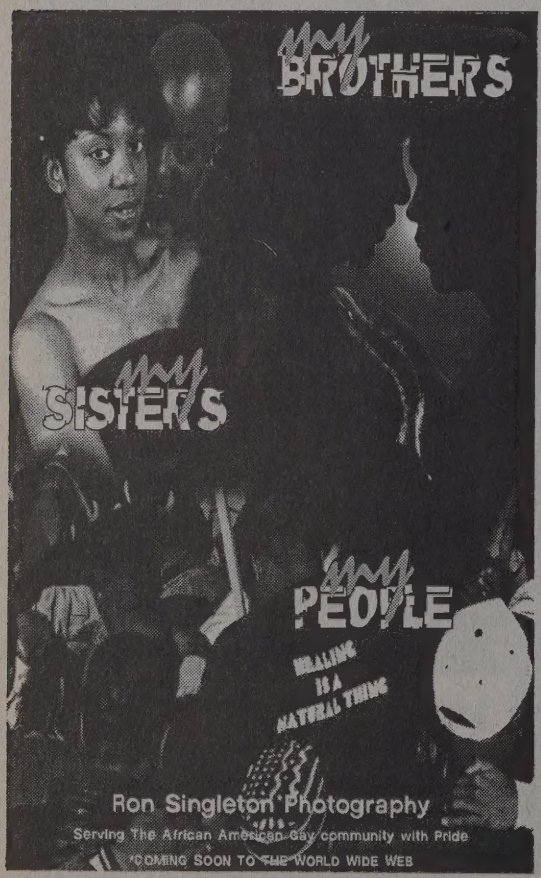
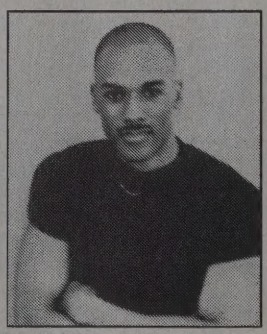


Meet the Author
Sunday, September 1 • 7:30 p.m.



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Take Control

Honorary Co-chair Senator Carol Moseley-Braun

This will be the seventh year the D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals will host its annual conference. This September 13-14 over 200 members of the black gay and lesbian community will meet at the Dupont Plaza Hotel to celebrate this year's conference theme, "Take Control."

According to Rosalind Smith, Conference Co-Chair, "Take Control, is very liberating as a conference theme. It really says out loud that black lesbians and gay men are visible, and that it is our turn to grasp all of the powers that are affecting our lives."

The two day event, opens with a congressional reception on Capitol Hill. This year, Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun will serve as honorary co-chair of the event. "Last year we were very successful with the opening reception," said Everett Hamilton, Conference Co-Chair. "Mayor Marion Barry and D.C. Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, were honorary co-chairs along with an honorary reception committee composed of 12 members of the Congressional Black Caucus and members of the D.C. City Council and School Board. This was the first time that an event by black lesbians and gay men had attracted that much visible support by public decision makers. That tells us that our message is starting to resonate in city hall and congressional offices."

Charisse Barsella and Frank Long have developed the Saturday conference program. The day will be filled with workshops, speakers and will close with a large group session designed to empower attendees to take control of the various situations that they encounter daily.

Workshops are divided into three tracks, Financially Speaking, Free Your Spirit and Sexual Politics. Topics range from workshops on doing business on the internet, to understanding our sexuality as revealed in sacred texts. "For too long black people have felt that homosexuality is not included in the Bible, and that we are somehow condemned. "That is false, said Barsella." "This workshop will look at all sacred text. And will show how gay men and lesbians are not only represented in the Bible, but how our creator's love is extended to all," she said.

According to Long, "I can't wait for the reaction of the audience at the workshop on "Tops and Bottoms, Femmes and Butch." Although it is a hysterical title, it really takes a serious look at how we stereotype each other and fall into a pattern of mimicking heterosexual behavior."

Wanda Alston, a self described political animal, is quick to comment, "This conference is also about politics. We will attempt to set an agenda for black lesbians and gay men. It won't be some grand document, but instead, we will define a few important issues that attendees can then return to their respective communities to act on."

The D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals is the oldest organization in the country still in existence that serves our community. Conference '96 is one of the groups annual projects. For more information about the organization or to register for Conference '96. Please call Everett Hamilton at 202-265-1428 or Rosalind Smith at 301-423-2728.

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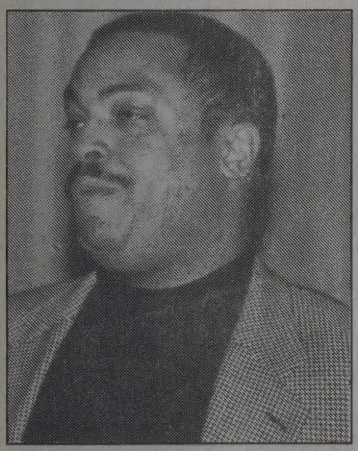
The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

A Hotter Than July Success Story

Detroit-The organizer's of Detroit's first Black gay/lesbian pride celebration have a lot to be Proud of. The action packed weekend featured non-stop fun and food. Co-produced by the renowned Billionaires Boy's Club, A Lorde Collective and The Ladies of



Author E. Lynn Harris

a Current Affair, the event felt more like the '10th annual' instead the first. (The momentum of the 8th annual BBC anniversary dinner is responsible for that!) Stanley Bennet Clay's SBC Magazine presented 'Man of the Year' Awards to several outstanding men including Kick Magazine's Curtis Lipscomb for community service; photographer, Ron Singleton for the Arts; and author E. Lynn Harris for literature.

Braves Announce AIDS Benefit "Stepping Up To The Plate for P.W.A.'s".

The Atlanta Braves have announced that the September 7th game against the New York Mets will be dedicated to those living with AIDS in the Greater Atlanta area. Prior to the game over 300 volunteers from local AIDS service organizations will form a giant human red ribbon on the field while accompanied by choral selections from the Metropolitan Community Church Choir.

Various musicians and celebrities will be on hand to assist in the pre-game festivities and the Atlanta Braves Foundation will follow with a significant contribution to Project Open Hand/Atlanta, AID/Atlanta and the Grady Infectious Disease Program's pediatric unit.

Special tickets to the September 7th game (including pre-game ceremonies) are available for $10 through Project Open Hand/Atlanta at (404) 872-8089. Two dollars of each ticket purchased through Project Open Hand will be used to continue their mission of providing two meals a day, seven days a week to about 500 Atlantans living with AIDS. Group seating is available making this an excellent opportunity for professional or service group outings. For more information contact: James Towers @ (404) 872-8089 X120, Project Open Hand/Atlanta

Black Basement Collective

Atlanta-Black Basement Collective presents Solidarity '96, an African-American festival of music, arts, crafts, food and more. Solidarity '96 will feature the BBC's diverse collection of musical genres and artistic influences. The event is a gathering of Atlanta's African-American Artisans, bridging gaps and changing structures. A collection of Funk, Rock, Reggae, Soul, Hip-Hop, Jazz and Blues, Still Life and Water Colors.

The Black Basement Collective, producers are dedicated to the perpetuation of African-American musicianship and artistic expression. We proudly stage events that utilize African-American talent, business and venues. Come and enjoy the splendor of our diverse community at the S.W.C.C.C. Amphitheater, 1444 Lucile Ave., in Historic West End. Saturday August 17,24& 31, 1996. Vendors, Musicians, and corporate sponsors wishing to be part of the series can call 404-755-3226 for more information or e-mail us at nustyl19@idt.vivid.net.

Gays Abroad

Amsterdam -The School for International Training's (SIT) Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies program successfully completed its third semester abroad in Amsterdam, the Netherlands this past May. The program, the first ever of its kind, represents a unique opportunity for students to pursue interests in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies from a European perspective.

Open to students attending colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada, SIT's program features interdisciplinary seminars on the life and culture of the Netherlands and on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues. Lecturers include those

The 411, continued

from the University of Amsterdam and the University of Utrecht in addition to representatives from organizations such as the Dutch Bisexual Organization and GALA, Amsterdam. Lecture topics include

those such as: The Social Geography of the Netherlands, Public Policy as it relates to Gays and Lesbians, Gender and Ambiguity in the 19th Century, and Contemporary Lesbigay Movements in Europe.

As SIT states in its Netherlands: Academic Program Report, "Any college semester abroad program challenges students to explore their own cultural identity, but the Netherlands: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies program provides an extra push in this direction. Gay life in the Netherlands is radically different than what one experiences in the United States, and exploration of this difference challenges students to see how time and place are constructors of their individual and cultural identities. The program uses this personal understanding and motivation to spur larger, more academic areas of learning."

The program fee includes tuition, room and board, international air travel, in-country excursions, and insurance. For more information concerning the Netherlands program, please call the Admissions Office at 1-800-336-1616.

Aids Survival Project Announces LiveWell Fund

Atlanta-AIDS Survival Project (ASP) has announced the formation of the LiveWell Fund to support a diverse set of special projects and initiatives. The fund's first sponsor is Patients Pharmacy, with a $50,000 pledge over five years at Sustaining Gold Sponsorship Level. There are six levels with contributions beginning at $1,000.

ASP is an Atlanta-area AIDS Service Organization that is recognized nationally for its HIV/AIDS Treatment Resource Center, which is considered the best in the southeast United States. Operation: Survival, a two-day retreat designed to provide information and knowledge to empower those infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS, is another renowned ASP program. The agency also offers peer counseling, advocacy concerning individuals and legislative issues and community programs, treatment conferences, a monthly publication, support groups, and other important educational services.

Patient's Pharmacy stepped forward aggressively to provide direct community support for AIDS services by helping to launch the LiveWell Fund and by simultaneously becoming the sole presenting sponsor of ASP's "Who's Dining Who?", a fundraising event held in September. AIDS Survival Project is a non-profit 501(c) (3) corporation. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

For more information write or call: Jeff Graham (or) Larry Sheldon, 828 W. Peachtree St. Suite 206, Atlanta, GA 30308; phone: (404) 874-7926 fax: (404) 872-1192

New Church Founded : Circle of Love Fellowship

Decatur-The Circle of Love Fellowship was founded and adopted by Bishop Stephanie Williams and members of C.O.L.O.R. (Coming Out Living Our Reality) on Sunday, July 7, 1996. They are located in the Memorial Bend Office Park at 778 Rays Road, Suite 108. Services begin at 10:00 a.m "While we cannot change the image the world may have of us, we can educate ourselves about the truth of our being as a spiritual entity in this universe" says Bishop Williams.

Bishop Stephanie D. Williams is a native of Baltimore, Maryland, who presently resides in Stone Mountain, GA. She is the proud mother of son. Ordained as a pastor in 1985, and consecrated into the Bishopric in 1993, Bishop Williams founded and pastored the Word of Truth Center Church, Baltimore, MD from September, 1985 to May, 1994(formerly known as Spirit of Liberty Church) an independent interdenominational church.

The Circle of Love Fellowship is a non-discriminatory, Liberationist, Metaphysical/Theological Bible-believing church with a ministry to the needs of the Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgendered-Gay-friendly African-American community and people of color and of non-color.

Gay rights activists heckled out of Zimbabwe fair

HARARE, Zimbabwe — Gay rights activists abandoned their booth at Africa's biggest book fair Friday after it was besieged by fist-waving opponents trying to prevent the display of gay rights pamphlets. Roughly 100 protesters kept the activists from showing the pamphlets — which the government has called obscene — despite a second court ruling Friday in favor of the group Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe. "We don't want to turn violent, but these people are violating our rights. GALZ must be completely destroyed. They are here to rearrange the hormones of our youths," said Nixon Nyikadzino, a student.

Gay rights display destroyed

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Demonstrators destroyed Zimbabwe's first gay rights exhibit Saturday minutes after activists staffing the booth fled a jeering mob.

The government had fought to keep Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe out of Africa's biggest book fair, saying its material was obscene. The display was allowed after a judge ruled in favor of the country's only gay organization.

The booth was set up near the back entrance of the hall to allow the activists to escape if necessary.

Activists faced off Saturday with hecklers, including a man who attempted to grab and kiss a lesbian staffing the booth.

The activists distributed information on gay rights for three hours on the last day of the fair, but trouble started shortly before they were scheduled to leave.

Some protesters chanted, "Our president says no," a reference to President Robert Mugabe, who banned the group from the fair last year.

The group decided it had made its point and left early. Protesters then set the pamphlets ablaze and broke up the booth.

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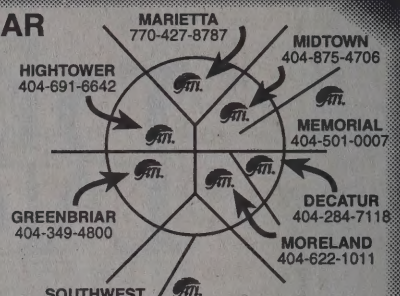

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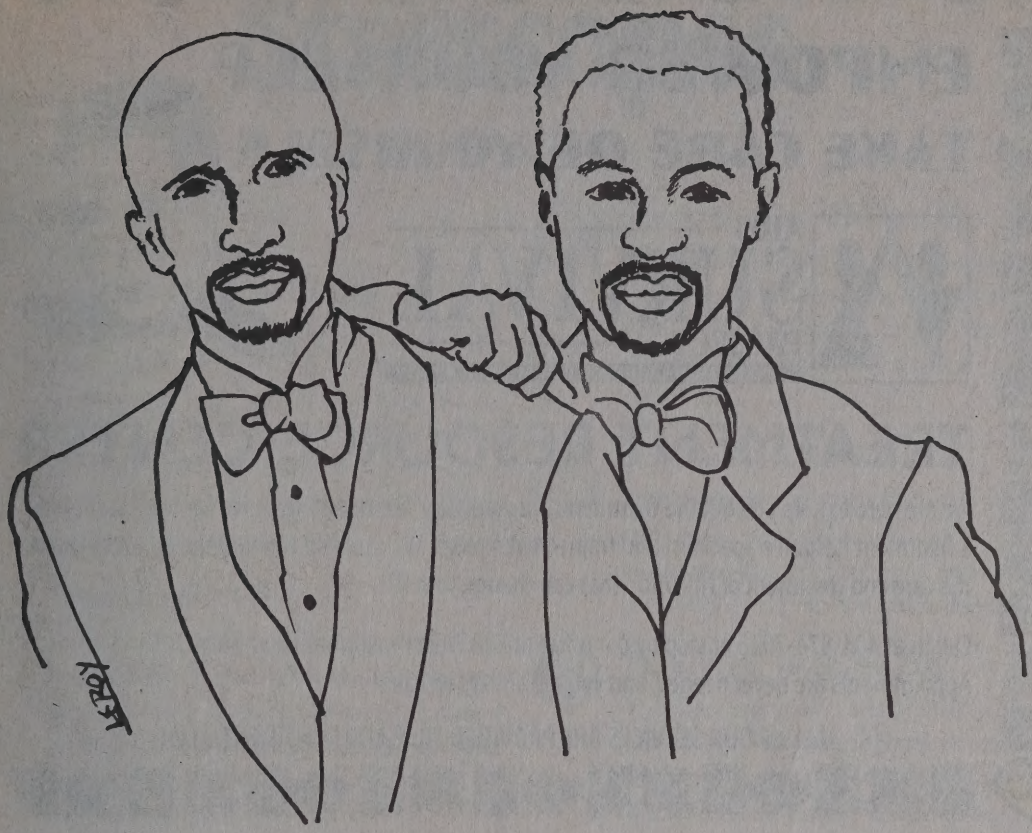

By Any Other Name

by Kevin Isom

I didn't set out from law school to become a gay lawyer. Like sexual orientation itself, it wasn't a choice. It sort of happened. Though I was probably predisposed. Most people, despite the overwhelming abundance of lawyers, see law from the outside looking in. I see it from the other way around.

One of the things I've seen a lot of lately is some very serious goings-on when gay men commit to each other. You can approximate most aspects of marriage by contract. But symbols are important, and one of the things that happens a great deal these days is the changing of names. It's simple in most states.

You can give any dumb reason you want for changing your surname, like "I think Rockefeller sounds good on me" or "I want to be named Stevens because I always liked Samantha in Bewitched." Some people tell the truth, as in, "I'm in a committed relationship, and I want my name to reflect that."

This brings us to the question, why does anyone want his last name to reflect his relationship status? But before we get into that, we should look at the patterns. There are three basic patterns gays are using in changing their names. Most people hyphenate their last names, as in Bob and Rod Paris-Jackson. (Have you ever noticed that they're always mentioned as "Bob and Rod," with Rod as second billing? Perhaps because Bob got to be on top in the surname.) Other people change their last names to something else entirely. A lesbian Jewish couple changed their last names to the Hebrew

CONTINUED ON PAGE 49

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Starscopes

by Dada

Happy Birthday Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

This month don't try to rush things that are not progressing as quickly as you'd like. Although you're happier in a relationship than not, love affairs at this time may be somewhat elusive. When it comes to romance you may find yourself attracted to those who have pride, ambition, and who are somewhat unconventional. Libra, Aquarius, and Cancer play roles.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You're better with the intellectual than purely emotional and not likely to wear your heart on your sleeves. Having an overly critical attitude toward life in general and romance in particular can make you miss out on some excellent opportunities for true companionship.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Now's the time to make the most of your business and financial standing. Take your ideas from the drawing board to the board room. You're good at keeping secrets, especially, how you feel about others. Your love life may not always be as harmonious as it appears.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Resist the temptation to indulge in self destructive behavior when you're feeling depressed. Allow bygones to be bygones. Use your excellent powers of concentration visualization to affect positive changes in your life that you seek.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Your strength lies in your ever present optimism. Learn to value those worse moments of your life and learn from them. Although you usually have a significant other you do much better on your own. Independence is your motto.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Being practical and living in the real world are your strong points. You possess the ability to move forward so you need to gain control over negative thoughts. The solution to a long held problem is close at hand.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Feeling dependent is the type of situation you like to steer clear of. Since you do quite alight on your own avoid hermit-like tendencies. Your misplaced compassion will get you into more trouble than it's worth.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Verbalizing your feelings could be the best way to clear the air. You are feeling quite attractive lately and it comes across to everyone around you. You're in touch with the guiding impulses of your nature and enjoy expressing yourself.

Aries (March 21-Apr. 19)

Tackling some rather important chores for a relative will result in heartfelt gratitude. Don't be afraid to allow your accomplishments to shine through. You enjoy living for the moment and to the fullest.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You seem to be able to handle just about anything which may be thrown in your direction. when you put a lot of faith in those you care for, it's a shock when someone lets you down. Keep your self esteem intact and strive on.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Ongoing relationships are a little strained presently, and new ones are dubious. Just wait it out and things will soon improve. Your outgoing nature allows you to draw friends from all walks of life.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Being quite a homebody, now would be an excellent time to capitalize on any inclinations you have in that direction. It's important to you that your loved one's emotional intensity matches or even surpasses that of your own.

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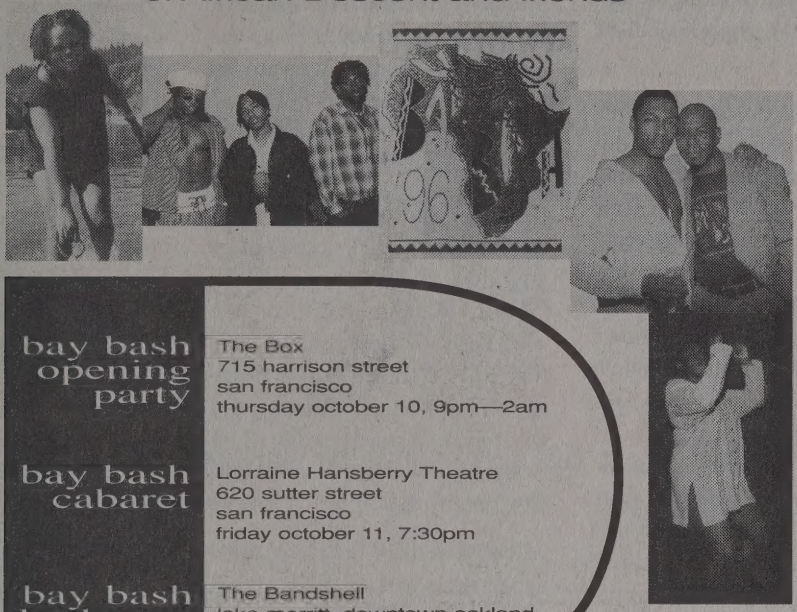

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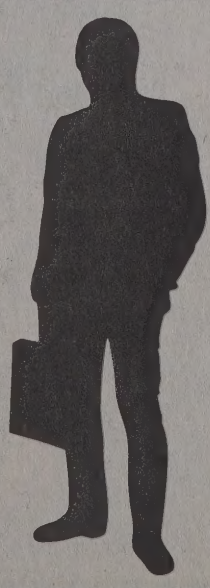

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PERRY WATKINS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

He is remembered by GLAAD as a soldier who was asked and who DID tell, and served anyway; who wore his uniform and his drag outfits with equal pride.

expel Perry, and discharged him three years later when his enlistment expired.

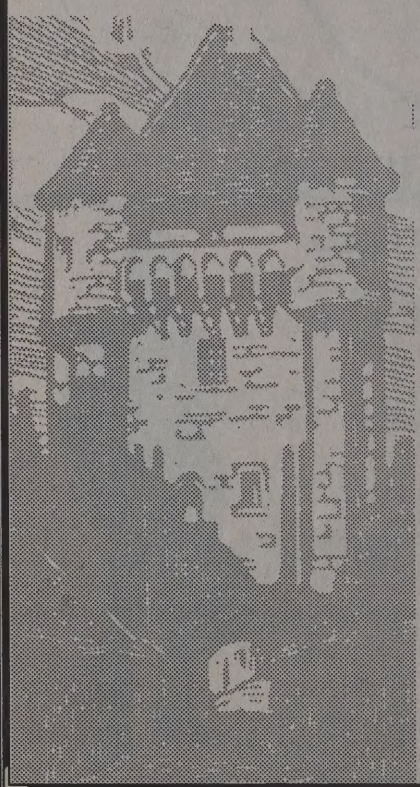
Perry fought this decision with the help of the ACLU over the next several years in Watkins v. U.S. Army. In 1989 a federal appeals court ordered him reinstated to active duty, reasoning that if the army drafted him and repeatedly re-enlisted him knowing he was gay, then they couldn't discharge him for being gay. The Justice Department appealed the decision but the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear the case and let stand the decision of the lower court. Perry thus became the first openly gay serviceman to defeat the ban against gays in the military. He settled his suit with the Army, agreeing to forgo reentry to the military in return for back pay, honorable discharge, full retirement benefits, and a promotion to sergeant first class.

Perry's groundbreaking story was told in a 1994 documentary co-produced by New York's Chiqui Cartegena, entitled "Sis: The Perry Watkins Story." The film will be shown during Black gay Pride week in Atlanta and will run on Saturday Aug. 31 at 2:00pm at the Host Hotel, Holiday Inn Airport.

Perry went on making public appearances around the country, talking about his experience in the armed forces. Nothing so clearly and irrefutably displayed the Army's hypocrisy around its gay and lesbian policy as Perry's case.

On March 17, 1996 Perry J. Watkins died of AIDS-related complication in his home in Tacoma, Washington, at age 47. He is remembered by GLAAD as a soldier who was asked and who DID tell, and served anyway; who wore his uniform and his drag outfits with equal pride. He was a courageous role model for gay men and lesbians not only in the military, but in all parts of society.

written by Morgan Gwenwald and reprinted with permission of GLAAD IMAGES



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BY ANY OTHER NAME

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

word meaning "hope." Which, while touching, could lead to a series of gay couples named Sunshine, Nirvana and Peace.

And finally, still others follow what some would see as a more "traditional" model. One partner changes his name to the last name of the other. This third model can be very convenient in overcoming some sorts of red tape—if you go to the hospital and you have the same last name, everyone assumes you're related, so they're less inclined to kick your lover out of the emergency room.

The problem with the "traditional" model is its origins: in property. Most people don't realize that until about the last hundred years or so, marriage was a property deal, and names reflected that fact. A woman was legally her father's property (hence she bore his last name), and upon marriage she became her husband's property (hence, she was forced to take his last name). Not exactly Barbara Cartland, when you think about it.

So the question comes to mind, why would gays want to change their names to follow in the exchange-of-property tradition? Is this a tradition that we want to be a part of? Or think about this: since there's no legalized tradition of property exchange/marriage for gays, then is it somehow better when we change our names as an expression of love and commitment to each other?

I can't really answer to those questions, at least not without offending the straight world in its entirety, but I can describe some real-life experience. Like the name change I did for the life partner of an Atlanta social worker, Richard Alston. On the day of the hearing at the courthouse, Richard waited in the corridor while his life mate and I went into the judge's chambers. I couldn't tell who was shaking more, Richard or his partner.

When the hearing was over, we went back out into the corridor, and I announced, "Richard Alston, I'd like to present to you James Matthew Alston." They embraced and kissed there in the corridor of the Fulton County Courthouse. My eyes began to tear up, and I looked quickly down at my case file, blinking hard to hide the tears. After all, it wouldn't do for a client to see his lawyer cry.

Or then there were the clients who had met each other on the gay rodeo circuit (a rather amazing phenomenon, rife with comic potential). Bob and Earl wore matching boots and cowboy hats to their wedding, and a Clint Black look-a-like sang a country wedding march. But on the day of the hearing, only one of the two showed up at the courthouse. The other was sick. As the elevator doors closed, the one confided to me that in fact his partner—I think he actually said "pardner"—had AIDS, and that they had known that he was HIV+ for two years before the wedding.

My heart sank as the elevator climbed to the fifth floor of the courthouse. There was no embrace this time outside the judge's chambers, but I put my arm around my client as we walked back to the elevator. The point of all this is not the Bob and Rod who's-on-top debate or the eternal honey-will-we-wear-spurs-to-our-wedding question. It's the outward indicia of two human beings joining themselves together as a team to embrace tomorrow.

It's hope and love and commitment and a desire to be together for the future. Traditional values, by any other name.

Most people don't realize that until about the last hundred years or so, marriage was a property deal, and names reflected that fact. A woman was legally her father's property (hence she bore his last name), and upon marriage she became her husband's property (hence, she was forced to take his last name). Not exactly Barbara Cartland, when you think about it.

Kevin Isom is an attorney and writer in Atlanta.

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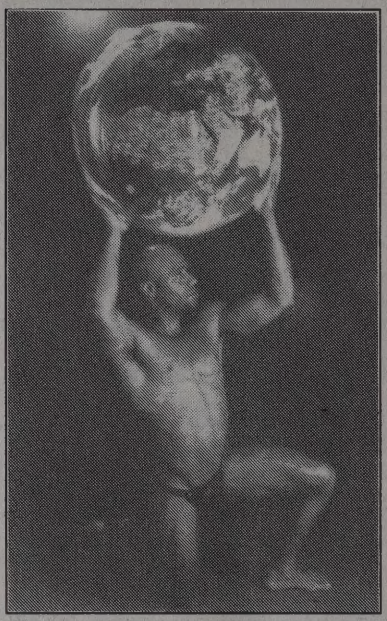

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752-9610 (Fax)
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AIDS Survival Project
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Brother Back-2-Back
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Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)
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Stonewall Bar Association
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All Saints Community Church
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NATIONAL EVENTS

AUG. 27-SEPT. 1

Atlanta's Black Gay Pride Week—In The Life Atlanta, Venus Magazine, Adodi Muse, Think It's Not When It Iz, and Second Sunday hosts PRIDE IS POWER '96. See Black Gay Pride Pocket Guide on page 12.
Contact numbers: ITLA Pride line 404-872-6410. Host Hotel, Holiday Inn Airport, $65 sing/dbl 404-762-8411. Venus Magazine info line 404-622-8069. Adodi Muse info line 404-525 521-2515. Think It's Not info line 770-808-3984. Second Sunday info line 404-325-7321

OCT. 10-13, 1996

Bay Bash '96, San Francisco—Thurs: Opening Party, The Box, 9 pm-2 am; Fri: Cabaret, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, 7:30 pm; Sat: BBQ, Lake Merritt, Downtown Oakland, 1 pm-6 pm; Sun: Sunset Cruise, Sausalito 5 pm-8 pm. For info call 415-922-5156

NOVEMBER 1-3, 1996

Phoenix, AZ Divas in the Desert—Fri: Bid Whist National Tournament, Lexington Hotel, 7:30 pm; Sat: Mr. and Ms. Hot Body Picnic at Roosevelt Dam & Lake, 12 noon; Sat: Disco Dance & Diva Contest, 9 pm. For info call 602-978-6219

OUT & about

L-R, poet, Queen; author, Joan Fountain; publisher, Charlene Cothran; actress, Debra Dukes; image consultant, Joy Barnes; and graphic artist Phyllis Robinson all enjoyed the National Black Arts Festival's opening after party gala at the Occidental Grand Hotel.

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

The 'Atlanta Delegation' plans to attend the 10th Anniversary Convention of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum, in L.A. in February 1997.

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The SKYY Ball at the Mel Fisher Maritime Museum
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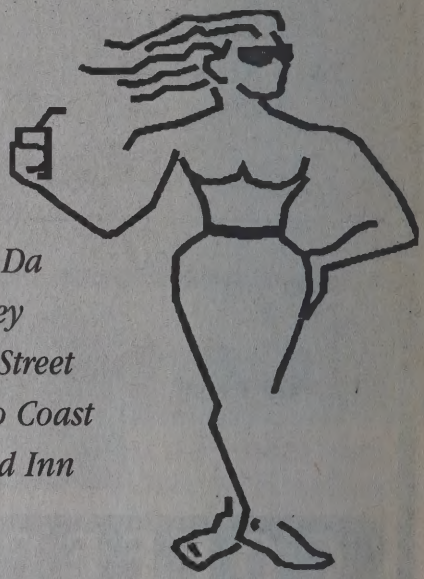
The WomenFest Brunch Fashion Show at Alexander's
The Infamous Wet T-Shirt Contest at Atlantic Shores Resort
The WomenFest Tennis Tournament at Holiday Inn Beachside



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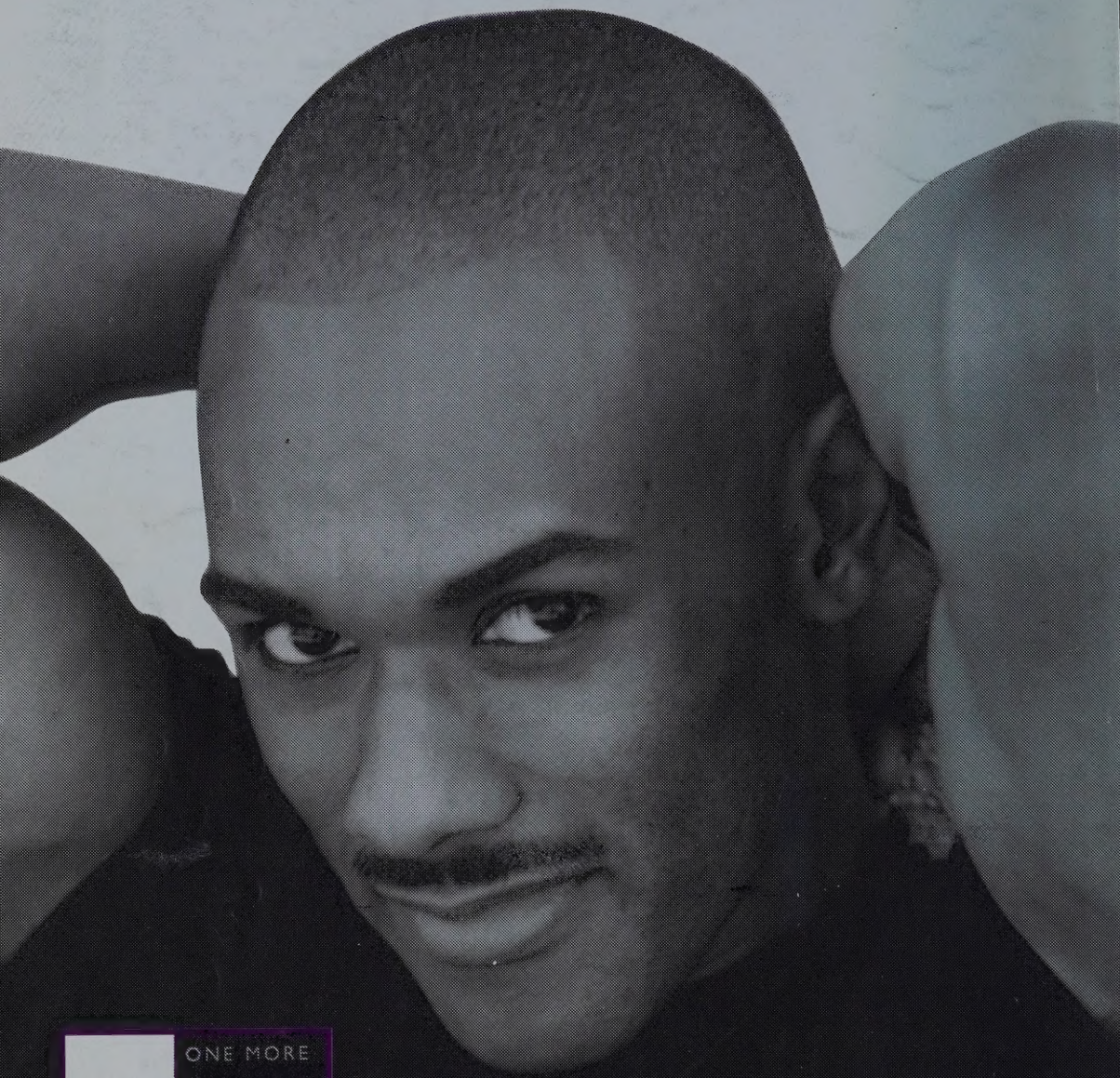

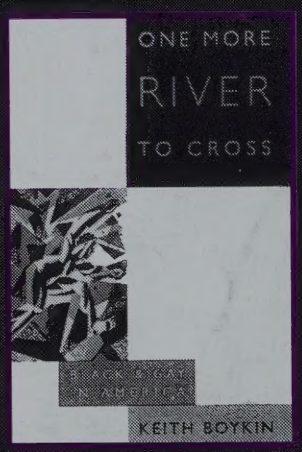

The Book:

One More River to Cross

By Keith Boykin

Executive Director of the National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum

August 31, 2 p.m. - Shrine of the Black Madonna Books
September 1, 7:30 p.m. - Outwrite Books

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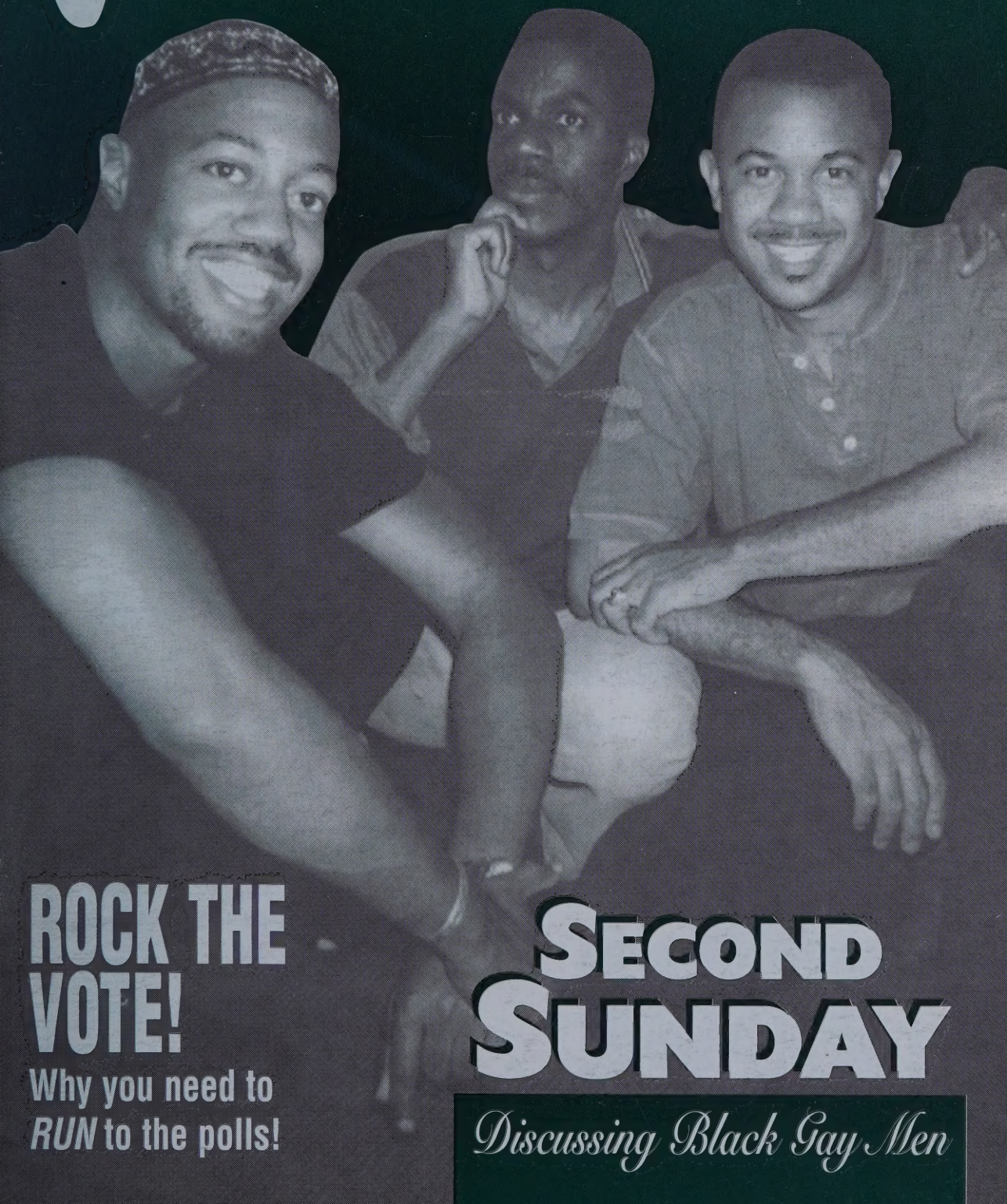

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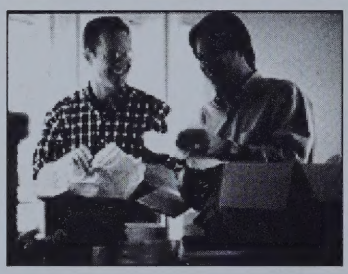

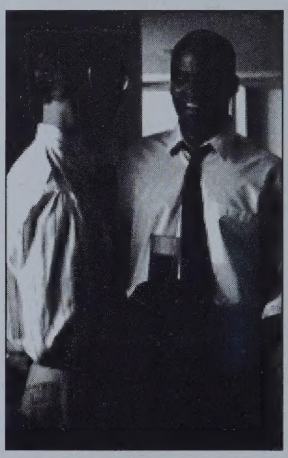

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LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR,

I really enjoy Venus magazine. It alerts me to the activities of the African American community within Atlanta and elsewhere. You and your staff are performing a great and wonderful service uniting gays and lesbians, informing each of us of the broad spectrum of our diversity...

All the best,

Penelope Williams, musician/producer.

DEAR EDITOR,

I'm a black gay male from South Florida. I had the fortune to visit Atlanta in June and I have decided to relocate to Atlanta! I happened to pick up a copy of VENUS in Ansley Square and I've never seen anything like it! I'm really interested in meeting people and learning more about Atlanta's Black Gay Community.

Sincerely,

D.J.Murphy

VENUS:

I picked up a copy from a friend of mine in NYC, and then I grabbed another copy at the National Association of Black Journalists in Nashville. I really love your work. Keep up the good work and I hope to submit a piece for a future issue.

Thanks,

Lee Jones

DEAR EDITOR:

Thank you for telling the inspiring story of Perry J. Watkins. I feel proud knowing that the first openly gay serviceman to defeat the ban against gays in the military was an African-American. Keep up the good work.

Hungry for History,

Geoffrey Flowers

Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

October/November 1996
Vol. 2., No. 9

Editor in Chief	Charlene Cothran
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COVER SHOT
by Jena P. Jones

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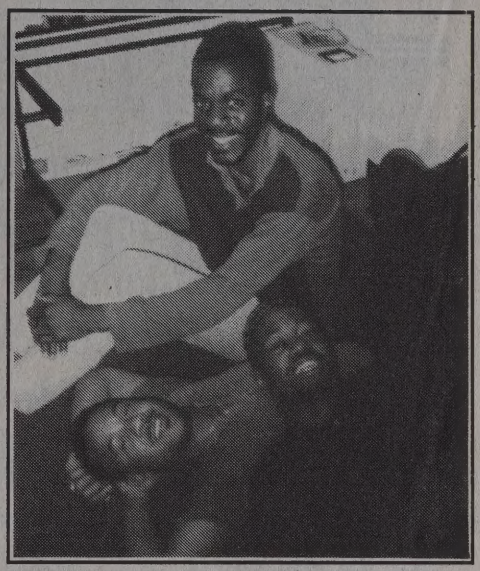

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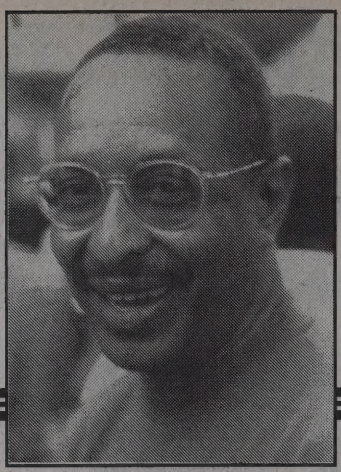

People are STILL talking about what a grand time they had in Atlanta for Labor Day during Black Gay Pride Weekend.

There was so much going on! Since we couldn't be everywhere at once we decided to seek out some of the storytelling about the weekend's activities.

All we can say is

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...Run out of liquor at Loretta's on Black Gay Pride Weekend!

...Go crotch watching at Underground with socks stuffed down your pants!

...Throw an after-party for Black lesbians over 60 and No They Didn't show up in stretch white limos!

...Pass out Honorary Lesbian passes to gay men who insisted on attending the 1st Annual Womens' Ice Breaker!

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From The Editor

Charlene Cothran
Publisher/Editor

The best advice I've been given as a publisher is to 'Always be in a mode of progression'. That one statement has served as inspiration when things seemed to want to stand still. Venus started as a tiny lesbian events calendar. Sought after by local advertisers who recognized the need to connect with the black gay community she progressed into a monthly newsletter. In less than 12 months from the last published newsletter, Venus became Atlanta's first black gay free monthly magazine.

We are still in that mode of progression as we move Venus from the 'free' rack to news stands all over the country.

The news stand edition of Venus will be Hot and Exciting! The sizzling new format is designed to reach out and grab you and not let you go until you've devoured the issue from cover to cover! The New Venus is chalked full of exclusive interviews with your favorite entertainers, authors, politicians and religious leaders, starting with gospel singing sensation ANN NESBY on the cover of the 1997 Second Anniversary Edition.

As we remain focused on the magazine's mission to 'educate, inform and increase awareness and self esteem' we step out on faith in Full Color, fully expecting your critique and support. There are a number of things that we expect from you. We expect your subscription order immediately! We expect your participation in market surveys letting us know how we're doing and what you want , and what your spending habits are like. We expect you to encourage friends and relatives to read Venus. Most of all, we expect your response to articles and advertising. We're looking for your e-mail and letters about the things you liked or didn't like in each issue.

You're holding in your hands the last free copy of Venus, but that doesn't mean that a good thing has come to an end. It means that in the name of progress we know that you will continue to support us by purchasing your next copy of Venus at your favorite bookstore.

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PROFILE OF A WOMAN

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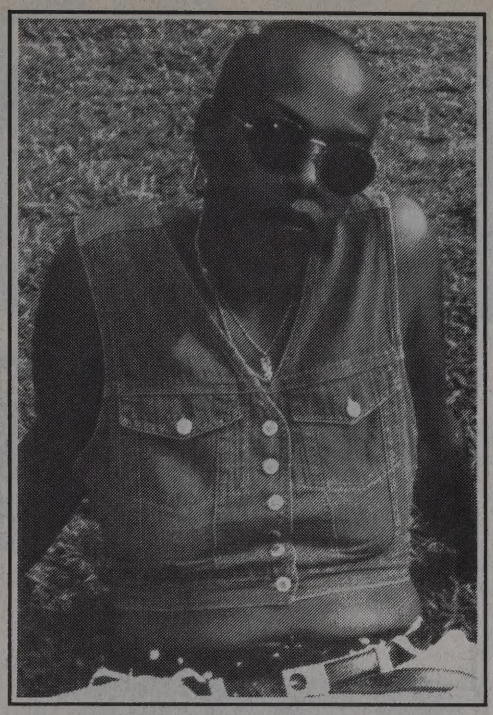
Age: 37

Status: . . . . Single

Career: . . . . Construction/ Demolition

Hometown: . Pittsburgh, PA

Latest Book: . "Lesbian Erotics" by Karla Jay



Squeeze-the definition according to each letter is S-Sexy for life, Q-Queen of desire, U-ultimate lover, E-erotic, E-edible, Z-zest for style, E-equal to none! I'm one proud black woman.

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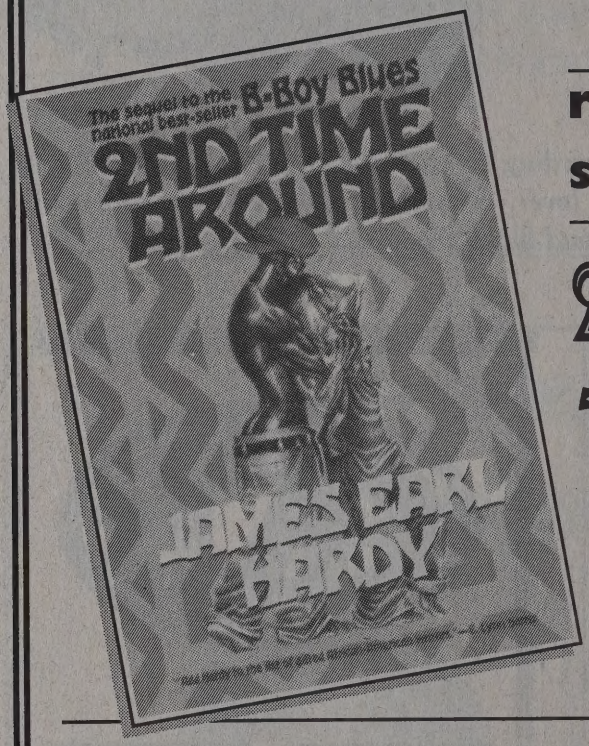
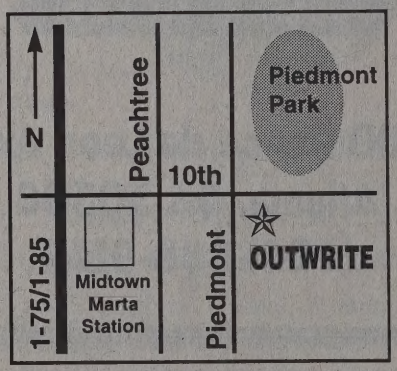


Saturday, November 9th • 8:00 pm



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The South's Source for Information On Our Lives.

SECOND SUNDAY

by Craig Washington

Second Sunday's mission statement defines the group as "a support organization created to assist the collective growth of gay, bisexual and transgendered men of African descent through educational, social, spiritual and cultural activities." They discuss scheduled topics that address a broad range of issues such as relationship maintenance, masculinity/femininity, ageism and others. As the name implies, the brothers congregate every second Sunday of each month. The regular meeting place was secured through an arrangement with Pastor S.F. Mahee of Unity Fellowship, Atlanta's only openly gay place of worship for the BG & L community.

On the second Sunday in November the group will host writer, James Earl Hardy, author of "2nd Time Around". The December meeting will host Atlanta's local black gay theatre/readers group, Adodi Muse. All gay men of color are welcome. For directions and other information call 404-325-7321.

Meetings open with announcements highlighting group activities and community events. Discussion is led by a predesignated facilitator who encourages participation through

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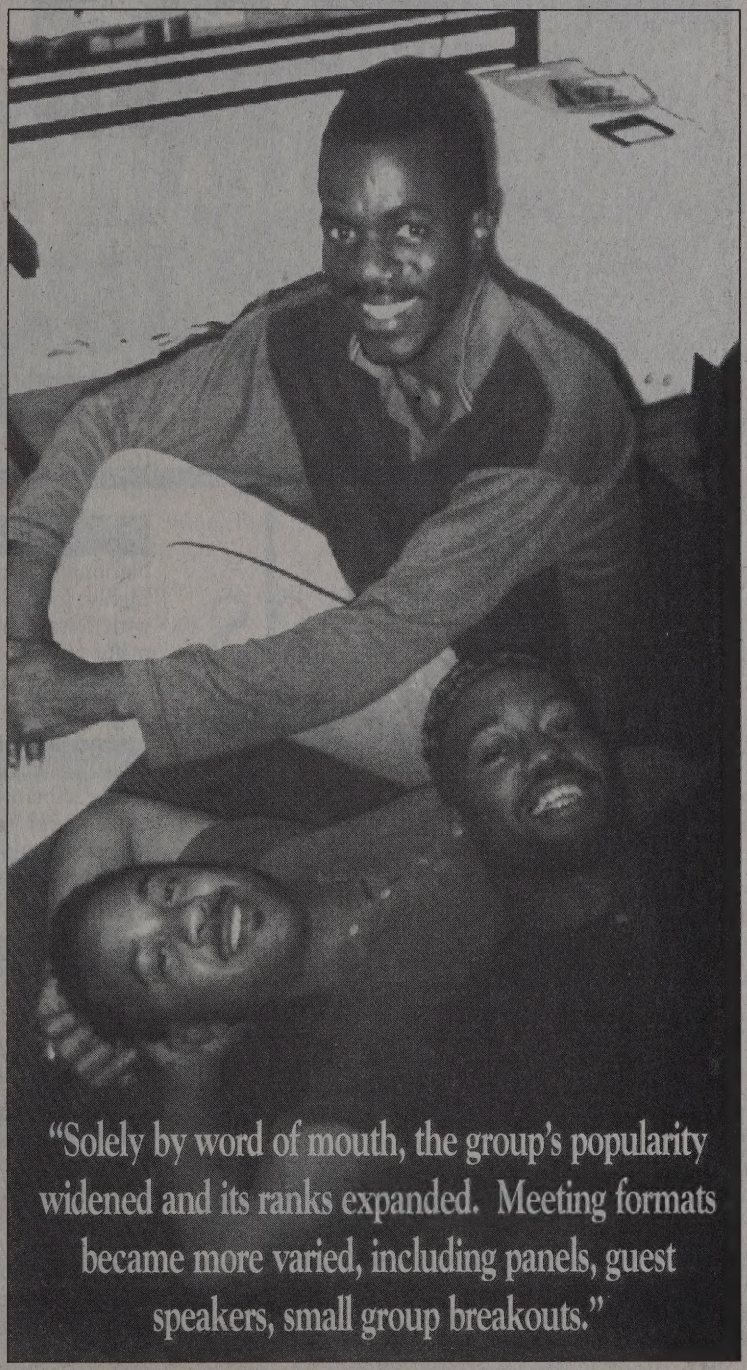

"Solely by word of mouth, the group's popularity widened and its ranks expanded. Meeting formats became more varied, including panels, guest speakers, small group breakouts."

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SECOND SUNDAY,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

exploration of the topic. Attendants are urged to use "I" statements and to speak from personal experience. Because of the sensitivity of information shared (such as HIV disclosure) the group requests discretion and confidentiality. Non-judgmentalism is another golden rule usually obeyed. The meetings are often high-spirited as participants are passionate about their concerns. And of course, everyone has an opinion which makes for lively conversation. To the group's merit, the brothers agree to disagree with vehemence, not venom.

At the discussion's end, donations are solicited through a passing of the proverbial plate. Attendants then join hands and are led through a closing affirmation which varies from traditional Christian prayer to an Afrocentric appreciation of the Creator and our ancestors. Specific words of healing are offered after a particularly intense session. Afterward, the "congregation" breaks bread with potluck meals set up just outside the meeting space. Brothers then have an opportunity to relax, meet new faces and enjoy each other's energy.

It all started in November 1992 on a car ride back to Atlanta. Maurice Franklin, a well-known Atlanta activist now living in New York and a friend were returning from a Howard University homecoming weekend. During the trip, the two friends had attended a black gay men's rap session focusing on shade-consciousness within the race. On the return drive to Atlanta, they buzzed about the potential for similar organizing in their city. They hammered out the structure and logistics and Franklin rounded up other local activists like Archie Freeman, Kamau Ifoma and Bruce Wilkerson. "We had about nine people show up to that first meeting at my house," Franklin recalls. "The first topic was 'Does Your Mama Know.?' We were at different levels of comfort regarding our sexuality. We wanted a structure that supported honesty and free thought."

From its inception, Second Sunday had an informal style that promoted intimacy and spirituality. Monthly meetings were scheduled for the second Sunday, and rotated among members' homes. Potluck meals were established as a ritual. The spirits of the ancestors were invoked regularly. Word quickly spread throughout the community that something special was happening for black men - an entity created by and for brothers to provide safety for each other as same-sex attracted men. "It was time for black gay men to take care of their own," Franklin muses. "If we live in fear we cannot be strong. We wanted to foster new people to become leaders."

Solely by word of mouth, the group's popularity widened and its ranks expanded. Meeting formats became more varied, including panels, guest speakers, small group breakouts. Presentations were often very stylish. A session on black and white men relationships was held as a mock trial with legendary diva Duncan Teague as attorney for the defendant "Interracial Dating." A joint meeting with ZAMI, the black lesbian organization, was entitled "Everything You Always Wanted To Ask A Lesbian But Were Afraid You'd Get Beat Up!"

Meetings were still held in members' homes, with more than forty men cramming into living rooms, and standing and squatting on floors. Some of the old guard such as Franklin and Freeman had relocated and newer members were stepping up to the plate. A handful of them handled all the necessary tasks — mailing flyers, setting up potluck and facilitating meetings. A focus group meeting was held at Kalo's Coffeehouse to identify problems and devise solutions. Doug Jones, a writer currently residing in New York, was an active member during that period. "Second Sunday was a child then going through its terrible two's. It was a natural outgrowth of new people coming in, a lack of continuity between the new and the early members."

By-Laws were written and elections were held to usher in formal structure and accountability. The two Co-Chairmen are Ulester Douglas, a psychotherapist, and instructor with Men Stopping Violence and The Rainbow Project; and Craig Washington, an activist and African American Outreach

With over 120 members on its mailing list and an average attendance of 65 men per meeting, Second Sunday has grown tremendously. Its success may be at least partially attributed to its adherence to its original priorities and despite its expansion, there is still a level of intimacy. It still offers an environment that's safe, fun and supportive. The potluck is still a mainstay.

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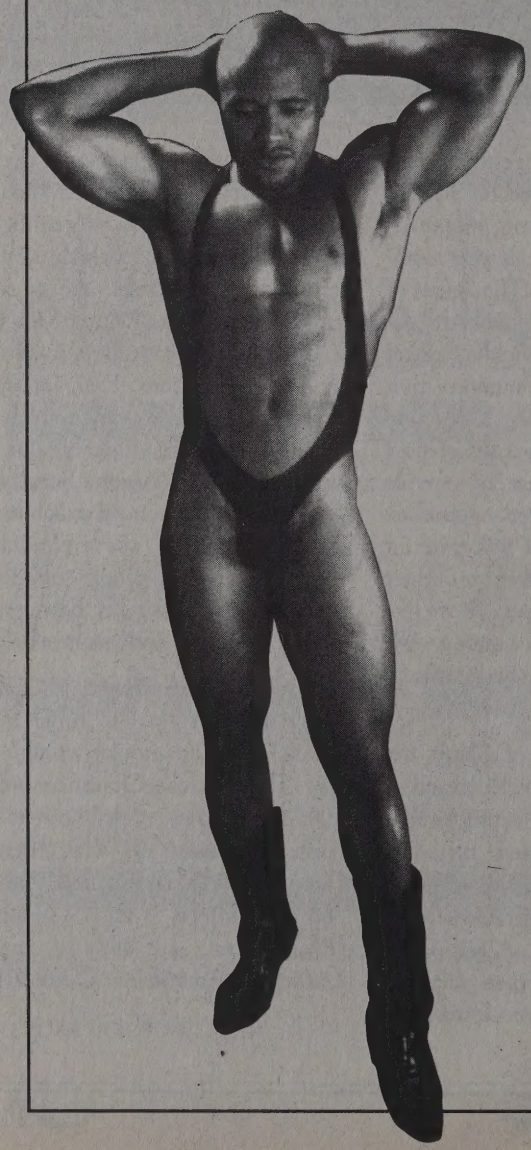

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SECOND SUNDAY,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Coordinator with AID Atlanta. Accountant Robert Simmons serves as the Treasurer and Kevin Madison, as Interim Secretary. A chain of several task committees, a steering committee and an executive committee performs the administrative duties.

With over 120 members on its mailing list and an average attendance of 65 men per meeting, Second Sunday has grown tremendously. It's success may be partially attributed to its adherence to its original priorities and despite its expansion, there is still a level of intimacy. It still offers an environment that is safe, fun and supportive. The potluck is still a mainstay. And there's no other space in town quite like it. Egypt Freeman explains, "[It's] something outside of the smoky bars and clubs where we look at each other in the dark. It's a way of meeting these people we see out and finding out who they are and what they're thinking." On a more personal note, Freeman adds, "I come to meet people and come out of my closet, not of sexuality, but my closet of personality. It makes it easier to talk to people." Co-Chairman Douglas adds , "Also, it is a place where we challenge the oppressive forces which nurture self-hate and distrust of each other. We build intimacy and a sense of community."

This year the group held several social functions to raise funds and promote more bonding outside of the meetings. The "Where The Boys Are - 1996 Picnic" was their first annual Labor Day fundraiser and drew favorable reviews from Atlantans and out-of-towners.

Second Sunday has made concerted efforts to address the AIDS epidemic in their community. They recently signed agreements with AIDS Education and Services for Minorities (AESM) and AID Atlanta's Umoja Project to host safer sex forums. An AIDS Walk team is being assembled and a panel discussion on Alternative AIDS Therapies is scheduled for November. The group also serves as a collaborator with an HIV-intervention program at Georgia State University targeting young black gay men.

As the organization undergoes growth in rank and activities, it strives to serve its main purpose - its raison d'etre. Some members have expressed concern that the focus could become lost. Hopefully, Second Sunday will continue to do what it does very well and the brothers will continue to attend. One member offered simply, "I just come here for the love, that's all."

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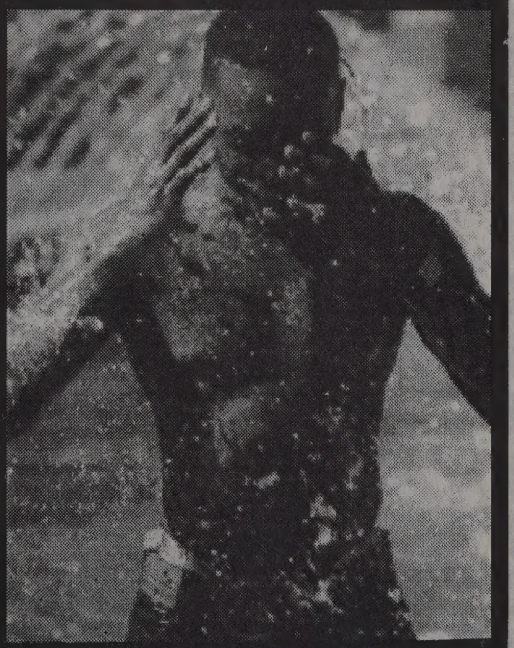

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The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

NBGLLF NEW D.C. Office

Washington, D.C.- One year after becoming a national organization the National Black gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum (NBGLLF) announced the opening of its new Washington, D.C. office on September 14,1996. The forum invited the community to visit the offices and meet staff and members of the board of directors at a half-day open house. The open house was followed by an evening reception and fund raiser.

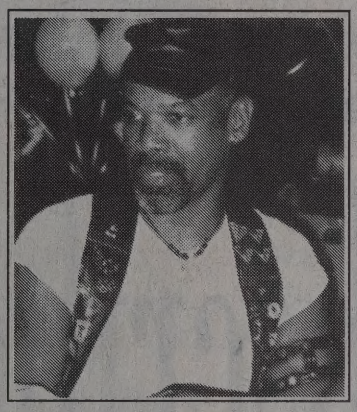
The guest speakers for the reception included Deval Patrick, U.S. Asst. Attorney General for Civil Rights, and Keith Boykin the Leadership Forum Executive Director who gave opening remarks. For more information about the new location, please call Mark Johnson @ (202)48-FORUM or (202)518-0388.

Black and White Men Together/Atlanta

BWMT/ Atlanta presents a two part series entitled "Breaking Down The Barriers-Why Are The Walls Still So High?" RAP Groups will be held on November 9, 1996. For more information, please call (404)892-BWMT(2968).

Mr. Southeast Drummer '95 leaves the Eagle

Atlanta-Rico Ware, manager of Atlanta's premiere leather bar, and the first and only black man to win a Mr. Southeast Drummer title, has announced his resignation from the Eagle. Ware has launched his own company entitled "Promethean Leather Productions, Inc." which will produce the 1997 Mr. & Ms. Georgia Olympus Leather Contest at Back-



Rico Ware

street on Sunday November 24th. The winners will compete in the finals for the 1997 International Mr. & Ms. Olympus Leather in February in New Orleans. For info call 404-622-7844.

Leathermen of Color Celebrate 1st Anniversary over Columbus Day Weekend

Chicago-ONYX, a club for leathermen of color, hosted their 1st Anniversary Weekend, The ONYX Blackout, on last month. A portion of the dance proceeds benefit the Leather Archives and Museum and Brother II Brother, a community outreach intervention project for African-American males. Cell Block Chicago hosted the reception where local sponsors were honored. Specific information can be obtained by calling the ONYX-line at (312)329-6141.

ZAMI Moves to New Location!!!

Atlanta-ZAMI, a support group for African-American Lesbians, will begin meeting in a larger space provided by the AIDS Survival Project, located at 828 West Peachtree Street Suite 206. Please note that the name is not on the building, only the address. The building is between 5th and Biltmore Streets.

Audre Lorde

Their new meeting times will be 4:00-6:00 pm. The door will be locked at 4:30 p.m. To gain entry please ring the buzzer. There is an elevator for those with mobility needs. The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Sundays (not every other Sunday), and plans to award three $1,000 scholarships named in honor of lesbian, feminist, poet Audre Lorde to deserving black lesbian college students. Call (404)370-1392 for more info.

Tribute to Dr. Barbara King

Atlanta-This year marks the 25th anniversary of Dr. Barbara King as the founder-minister of Hillside Chapel

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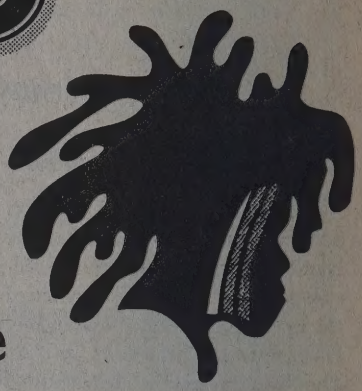

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for colored girls who have considered suicide/ when the rainbow is enuf

L-R: Jen Harper, Bernardine Mitchell, Brenda Porter, Kathy Smith, Roz White, Tamara Madison-Shaw, and Olivia Dawson in Jomandi's "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When The Rainbow Is Enuf." photo: Eric Johnson.

Jomandi Kicks Off Season With "For Colored Girls who Have Considered Suicide/When The Rainbow is Enuf"

Written by Ntozanke Shange and directed by Andrea Frye, this unique and dramatic piece stars Bernadine Mitchell, Roz White and Kathy Smith, from the award-winning **"Bessie's Blues"**. Also appearing is Brenda Porter from the Shirlene Holme's play **"A Lady and a Woman"**, and several other exceptional talents assembled as the strongest female cast since Jomandi's **"Jar the Floor"**. **"For Colored Girls"** is the first production of Jomandi's 18th Anniversary ***"From Broadway to Jomandi"*** Season of Classics. Performances run through November 10,1996, at the 14th Street Playhouse.

For tickets, call the Ticketmaster Arts Hotline 817-8700. For groups, subscriptions and other information, call 876-6346. Jomandi offers special discounts for STUDENTS and SENIOR CITIZENS at the 14th Street Box Office. Call 733-4750 for showtime and ticket prices.

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10

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ROCK THE VOTE

by Shirlene Holmes

I like the fact that Clinton was young, concerned about family and the disenfranchised. And really I dug Hillary, who was not going to be a First Lady who stayed at home baking cookies and writing books about her dog.

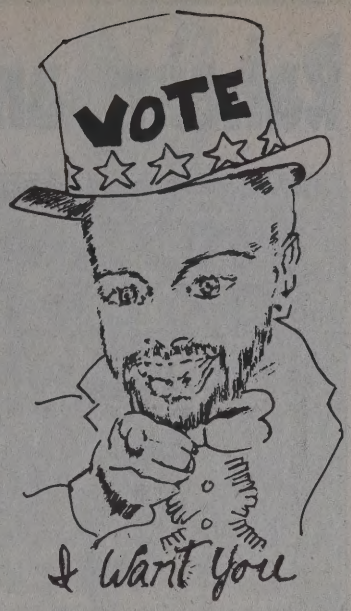
What I like about Clinton now is that he gave it a try these last 4 years. He did what he could. Let's face it, no one president can save America. She's too far gone. Her debts are too high. Her hands covered with so much blood. It's just a matter of time and she's going to fall. Anyone with a spiritual conscience knows that. There are too many signs. Even the birds are flying away from here. The way I look at it, if Egypt fell with all of her glory, America is only biding time.

The issue is, this country has got to stay afloat. I say, Clinton is the best person to do that. He knows what's going on, and he has not been the worst to govern this country. In other words he's been there and done that. If you vote for him, you pretty much know what you're getting.

One thing I do know is that we cannot elect someone who will turn back the clock. God forbid women lose the right to choose.....gays and lesbians are forced to retreat back to the closet....and African-Americans have to return to the back of the bus.

I am the last person to claim to be so perfectly political. I just know what time it is. It's time for change. Change of attitude, and change of action, and change of president. We can't fuss with the white folks or the straight folks or the religious folks, unless we get involved.

Knowledge is power, so we've got to be more informed, and more organized. We've got to start talking about November 4th and where we're at. We can't afford the apathy. We can't afford the procrastination nor the ignorance. The political process applies to us, whether we recognize it or not. Decisions are being made about our lives. What are we doing about it?



All we have to do is watch "Eyes on the Prize". Or think about Sojourner Truth and Martin Luther King, Jr. and them. There are too many named and unnamed to mention who fought for the vote and never got to cast it. We need to go to the polls out of respect for those who gave their lives. Excuses are no longer good enough. Take a look at your gross pay and then your net pay. Take a look at the homeless sleeping on the grass in the parks of the city. Take a look at the predictions for the next century.

Make November 4th a priority. Ask your lover if he or she votes. Make a date to go to the polls: put voting in the foreplay, honey. Don't sit where you are on the issue. Take responsibility; that's the absolute expression of gratitude and pride in your heritage.

As a family, we need to gather and pool our pennies. Alone we seem like nothing, but together we are many and mighty. You ever tried to pick up a bag of pennies? It's much too heavy to try to throw away. We are like that with our vote. When we cast our vote, we put our penny down on the chance that when the President gets ready to move (make a decision), he knows he's got alot of weight on him. He just can't pick us up and throw us around. He's got to do something, with us in mind.

In the days of revolution, the brothers and sisters used to say, "you're either *ON* the way or *IN* the way."

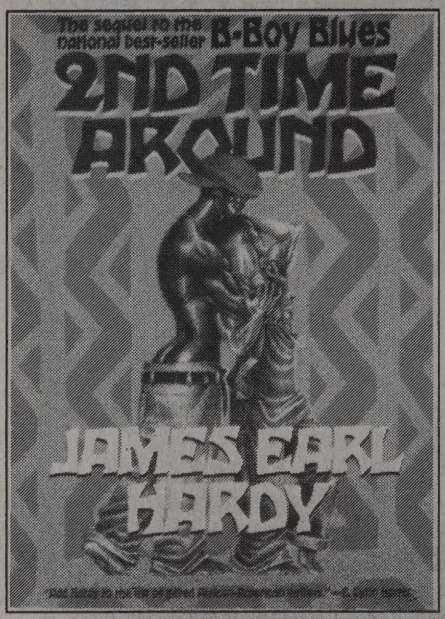
Don't just read this, then turn the page, and look at the ads.

Yes, I'm talking to you.

Make a commitment to being where it's at.

Vote on November 4th and count!

Raheim and Mitchell are back!



Yes, Raheim "Pooquie" Rivers and Mitchell "Little Bit" Crawford are back—and they've got a serious love thang goin' on, and IT'S ALL JOOD. But for Raheim, it's a trip that promises to be both phat and frightening. With love, mayhem, and family goin' on, it's no wonder Raheim doesn't go mad crazy!

alyson books

James Early Hardy will be reading from and signing copies of his new book on November 9th at the following Atlanta stores.

2:00 p.m.
Borders Books & Music
3637 Peachtree Road
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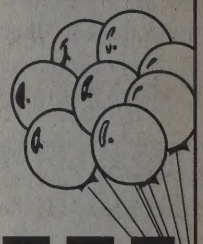

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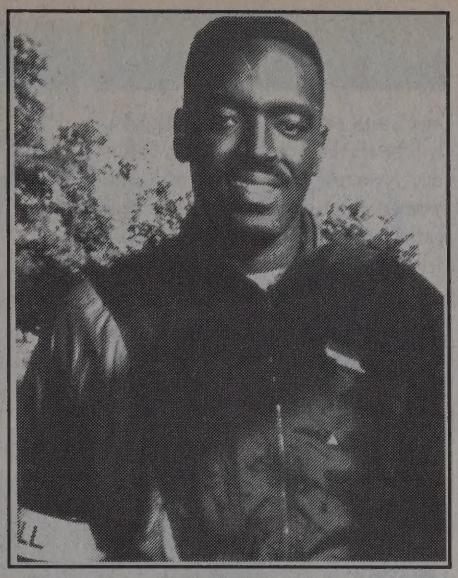
PROFILE OF A MAN

Name: . . . . Steve Lee Walker
Age: 28
Status: . . . . New committed relationship (Hip Hip Hurrah!!)
Hometown: . San Pedro Sula, Honduras, Central America (Now living in Houston, TX)
Career: . . . . Public health educator
Latest Book:. One More River to Cross, Black and Gay in America by Keith Boykin



The passage of DOMA and the defeat of ENDA come to me as a stinging wake-up call. Bisexuals, gay men, lesbians and transgender people of African descent must take a more visible role in defining ourselves and movement. We stand at the dawn of a new era, and must make certain we are part of the team of architects drafting plans of "the movement." We must address the homophobia that exits in our society and our ethnic communities with the same vigor that we combat the racism and sexism of America and of the "mainstream" gay community.

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The 411, continued

and Truth center. Dr. Maya Angelou will be the keynote speaker on Saturday November 9th where men and women from around the world will gather to honor the woman whose leadership, courage, love and vision

Dr. Maya Angelou

have made her one of the most influential women of all times. The Tribute to Dr. Barbara King will be held at the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel at 6:00 p.m. in Atlanta.

"Out in Black" poster

Los Angeles-Ron Singleton Photography announces the release of a new poster titled "Out in Black" (OIB). The new poster, the first for the artist, will feature many photographs of African-American gays & lesbians taken at the many different events and activities which Ron has covered during the past three years for

Photographer Ron Singleton

publications such as SBC, Venus and others, as well as some of his personal work. Many of the photos will also be included in an upcoming photo book and an exhibit of the same name.

Lambda Center Grand Opening

Atlanta- Lambda Center announced it's grand Opening on Saturday October 19th. The Center is located at 823 West Peachtree St. The keynote speaker was Torie Osborn, author of "Coming Home To America/ A Roadmap to Gay & Lesbian Empowerment."

The Hoyt Fuller film Festival

Atlanta-On Friday, November 22nd,1996 at 7PM, at the Georgia Pacific Auditorium on 133 Peachtree Street, The Atlanta African Film Society's 12th Annual Hoyt Fuller Film Festival, will premiere the much anticipated, "WITCH CATCHER", an ITVS/CPB production by acclaimed local Producer/Writer/ Director William Hudson. The Festival will also feature Afro-Cuban filmmaker, Gloria Rolando, introducing her latest film, "MY FOOTSTEPS in BARAGUA". The film merges family memories, traditional music and dance to tell the moving story of the English-speaking West Indian community in Cuba. Admission: $5/$4 for Atlanta African Film Society members. For further information, please call(404) 818-6444.

Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative

The Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative, a group of concerned lesbians representing various organizations in the metro-Atlanta area, are developing a support group for lesbians with cancer and their partners. We believe that an emotionally safe environment is essential in order to give and receive support. In keeping with providing a safe environment we are offering the group at no cost at a local feminist bookstore. If you are interested in participating in the support group or joining the Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative, please call (404) 651-2866, or write to us at: 1189 Euclid Avenue-Atlanta, Georgia 30307.

A Lady and A Woman

Atlanta-Dr. Shirlene Holmes, playwright and Professor of Communications at Georgia State University, read from her new work, Pride Cycle, at Charis Books earlier this month. The work consists of 7 plays in one and are short hilarious dramas about African-American gay and lesbian life. A packed house literally rolled in the isles as Holmes read a story about a lesbian couple discovering that their teenage daughter is also a lesbian. Her adored play 'A Lady and A Woman' has been published by Applause Books. Entitled Amazon Al Stars, Holmes' play is the only African-American piece in an anthology of lesbian lifestyle.

LGADDA elects New Officers, Makes Endorsements

Oakland-New officers of Lesbians and Gays of African Descent for Democratic Action (LGADDA) were elected. Ron Hypolite, an Oakland attorney and the Client Services Director of the AIDS Legal Referral Program, was elected chair for the 1996-97 terms. Hypolite is also the editor of Departure Point, an African-American monthly newsletter.

For further information please contact Gwenn Craig @(415)647-2441.

AALGA and NBLGF Co-Sponsor UJIMA Conference

Houston-The African-American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA) and the National Black Lesbian Gay Leadership Forum (NBLGLF) announced the UJIMA Conference in Houston November 15 through November 17 at the Sheraton Astrodome Hotel. Workshops will focus on homophobia, empowerment, coming out issues, HIV/AIDS, working with families, and working with the Black Church. A panel discussion will follow a screening of "All God's Children", co-produced by Dr. Sylvia Rhue and Dee Mosbacher.

Out Within

by: Dr. Shirlene Holmes

Boston Sisters enjoying National Coming Out Day.

October 11th was National Coming Out Day. I always have funny feelings about it. At this time, I think to myself, who can I come out to? Just who would be interested?

I believe that the most important folks in my life already know, and most often, they don't want to talk about it. It's all the other folks in my life that's the issue. Those old friends I grew up with back in my hometown. People I used to work with. Ex-boyfriends. Distant cousins. The psychic I visit who sees a man in your future. Yuch!

I don't advocate hiding. It's bad for the body. Gives you such inner stress, you find yourself in the arms of folks you normally wouldn't hold the door for in public. You've got to always be able to say I'm one of them and not flinch. No matter what.

Such courage comes with time.

I just hate that you get another label when you come out. The last thing I want to be called is queer. It doesn't even sound pretty. Queer ranks right up there with bitch and nigger. I know there is a big campaign by activists to rescue these derogatory names, but I still don't warm up to them.

I must admit I kind of like the power of being called a dyke or a bulldagger, sounds tough, and definitely, no nonsense. And lesbian is alright, but it seems like a Greek thang that the white girls chose to be called, and the rest of us just followed suit. I wonder what Egyptian women called sisters called themselves when they were lovers? They were probably so advanced, they didn't even need a name for it; it just was. Sometimes you just can't find the appropriate word for a thing. Gay and lesbian is the best of the names we have right now, so I concede. Call me that.

This coming out thing is an issue. Sometimes I just want to come out at the oddest times in the oddest places. Like at church, during testimony service. I just

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

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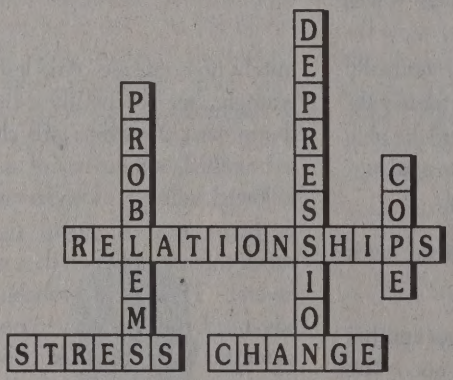

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OUT WITHIN,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

want to rise up and shout: "I'm a lesbian; praise the lord!", but I just know my mother would appear out of thin air to break my neck, as she did when I was a child. You just don't be but so honest in the Lord's house.

Sometimes I just want to come out at my annual visit to the GYN. In the middle of a pap smear, when he asks the dumb question, "what type of birth control are you using?" I just want to rise up and say, WOMEN!!!!! I'm a lesbian!" But I don't mention it until we're both in an upright position.

I've come to learn over time that coming out is a process. For some it is an over night sensation; for others it is a 10 to 20 year affair.

And of course, there are those who never come out. They are usually the dirty old so and so's, preying on the kindness of strangers. Or the suppressed, oppressed and depressed disenfranchised folks mumbling to themselves on park benches or church pews.

I have a friend named Karen who swears she never was coming out of the closet, because she was never in! I envy those born lesbians and gay men. Never knew anything else. Never even wanted to smell it. Just grew up same-sex attracted. All of us are not that fortunate; we discover ourselves a bit later in life.

I have a best friend in Boston, who put on her combat boots and kicked that closet door down when she came out. When we first met, she was a mild-mannered married heterosexual. She left Atlanta, and the next time I saw her she was Lesbian at Large, wearing rainbows and toting a thick little black book, saying to the girls, "you can take a number and wait". she told me she called every relative and friend and proudly proclaimed her new found sexuality, joined a support group for colored lesbians, and marched in every damn pride parade in her region. Not a lick of angst. Not a shutter or a tear. She was a born-again lesbian and glad about the whole thing! I could have kissed her. I wish it was that way for all of us.

I also have a friend buried in a closet on the west coast. Afraid to let anyone know he's gay except myself and strangers in the bars and alleys. He's a faithful servant of the church. He spends a lot of time praying that God nor the saints will ever find out about him. He had a wife once, just for appearances. She left him for a woman..... He's educated, handsome, and passionate about Jesus. And he's got less than 60 t-cells left in his body; I don't know how long he'll live.

I think National Coming Out Day is about telling yourself. Acknowledge you. It's not all about revealing yourself to others or marching in the pride parade. Or putting a rainbow sticker on your car or even reading your Venus magazine in public. It's about looking in that mirror and loving yourself. Coming out to you. Coming out within.

I think National Coming Out Day is about telling yourself. Acknowledge you. It's not all about revealing yourself to others or marching in the pride parade. Or putting a rainbow sticker on your car or even reading your Venus magazine in public. It's about looking in that mirror and loving yourself. Coming out to you. Coming out within.

Stop trying to be who others want you to be. You'll find if you claim your sexual identity people will dick-tate ('scuse me, but that's the real deal), how you're supposed to be. What clothes you should wear. Don't all gay males get their nails done? Shouldn't all lesbians have that androgynous look? Folks will tell you how you should walk and talk. What places you should frequent. You might find yourself weighed down with others' expectations and judgements. "You're not fierce enough, honey."

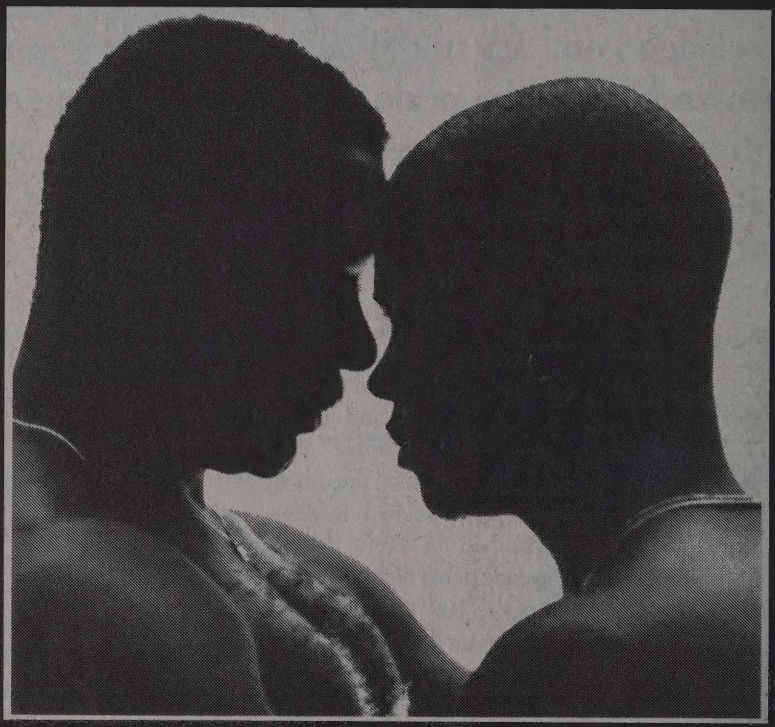
That's what they all say.

The real cause for celebration has nothing to do with telling others that you're in the life; it's affirming it within yourself, and being gay about it. (pun intended).

Go within and come out.

Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself!

Be Safe, Sexy, & Proud



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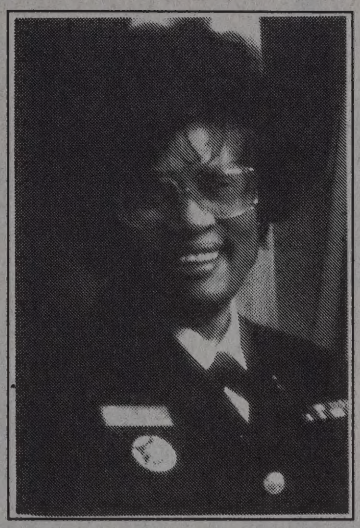
National Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Forum Announces 10th Anniversary Conference

Los Angeles—The Tenth Anniversary of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Conference and Institutes will take place February 13-17,1997 at the Long Beach Hilton & Towers in Long Beach, California. This year's theme, "Black Lesbians and Gays: Celebrating Our Legacy," will focus on the recognition and acknowledgment of the powerful, influential, and critical contributions made by Black Lesbians and Gays.

Confirmed speakers at the NBLGC include former Surgeon General Dr. Jocelyn Elders, poet and activist June Jordan, and Harvard Professor Dr. Cornel West.

L to R: Vallerie Wagner, Ruth Waters, Phil Wilson, Stephan Oxendine, co-founders and co-chairs of the 10th Annual National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum.

The Conference is currently soliciting vendors, workshop presenters and volunteers for the five-day event. Vendors will have the opportunity to display their merchandise in a prime locale at the Conference. Workshop presenters are needed to provide information to participants on issues of relevance to the community. Volunteers are needed to provide support for the Conference structure.



Dr. Jocelyn Elders is confirmed to address Black lesbians and gays in Long Beach, CA, February 1997.

Each year, the NBLGLF attracts nearly 1,000 national and international presenters and attendees. The Conference offers an ideal time for members, supporters and friends of the NBLGLF to reflect on issues, challenges and direction of the black lesbian and gay community.

The Forum will also sponsor several fund raising events around the country to raise money for the 1997 Conference Scholarship Fund. All revenue collected will go towards providing scholarships for PWA's and individuals with chronic illnesses.

Please contact the FORUM at (213)964-7820 for additional information.

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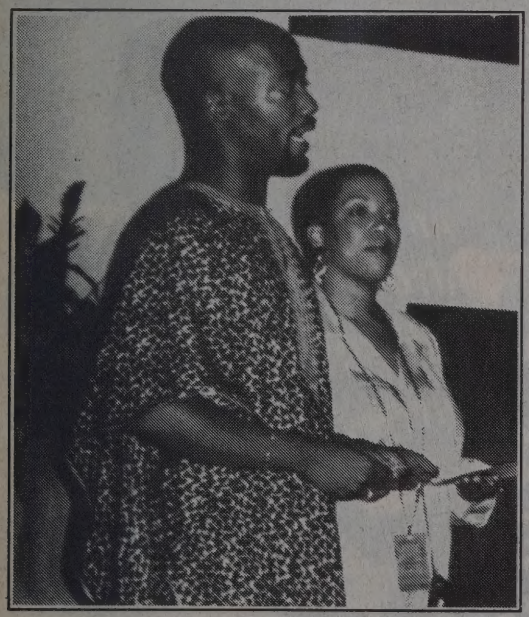
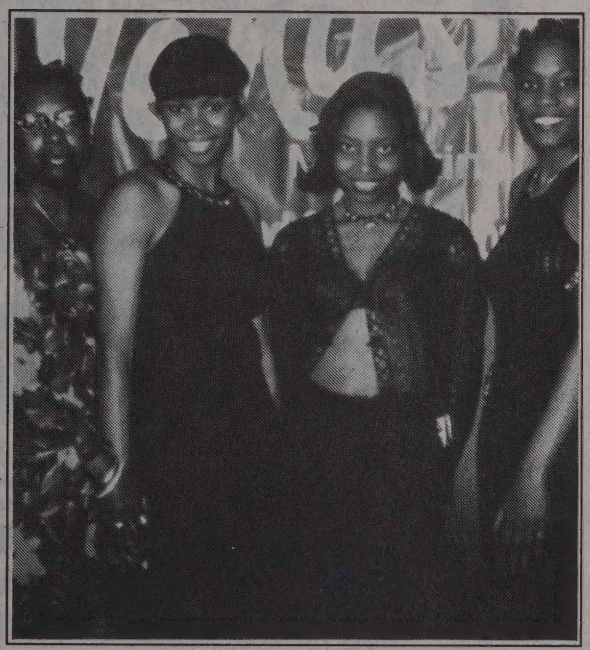
OUT & about

Joy Barnes reads a proclamation from the City of Atlanta celebrating Black Gay Pride '96 as Aida Rentos, and co-chairs Bruce Williams and Tara Summerville look on.



Craig Washington and Alishia Bristow served as Masters of Ceremony during In The Life's Kick Off Reception during Black Gay Pride '96.



Atlanta's TRIBECA Boutique sponsored Venus' fashion show during the annual Women's Ice Breaker.

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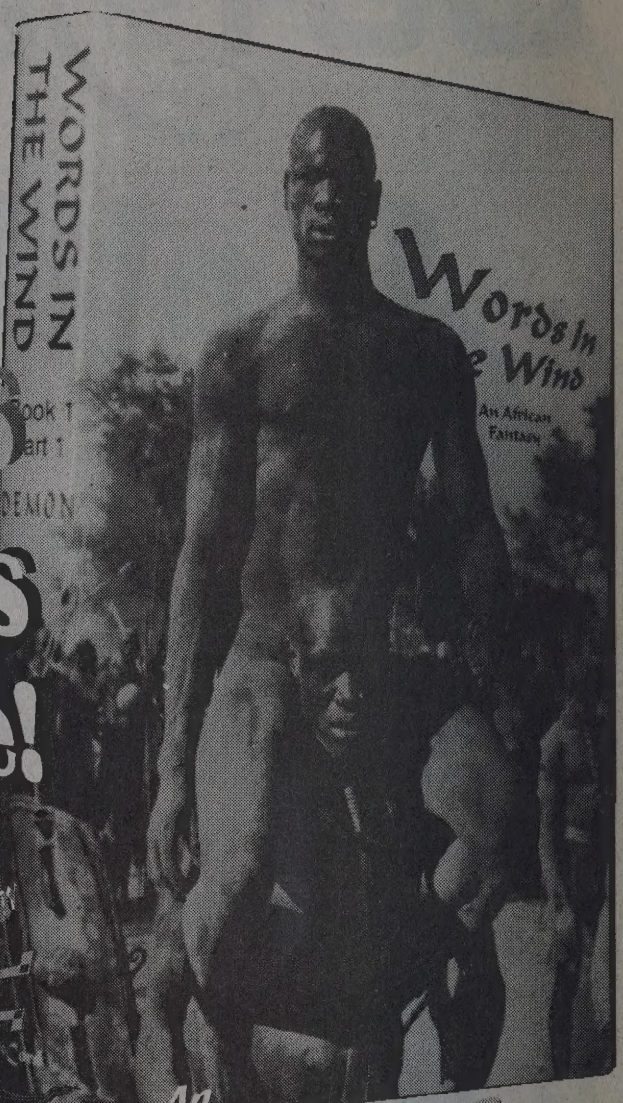

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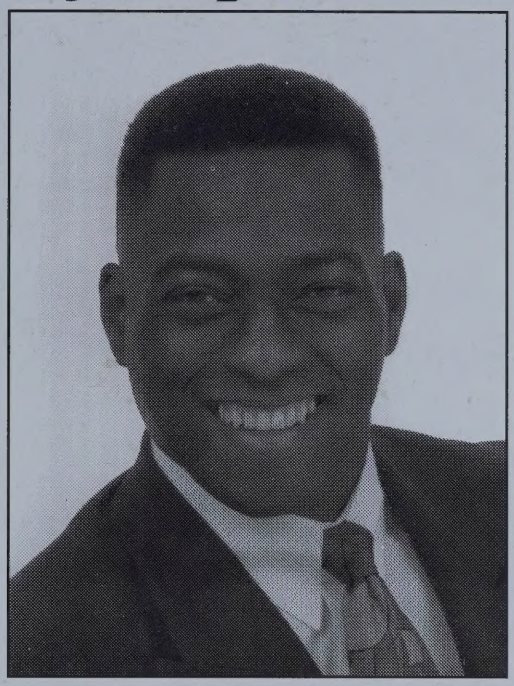

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